



# STUDIES IN SHAHNAMEH

BY THE SAME AUTHOR :

"IRANIAN AND INDIAN ANALOGUES OF  
THE LEGEND OF THE HOLY GRAIL".

"CULTS AND LEGENDS OF ANCIENT  
IRAN AND CHINA".

# STUDIES IN SHĀHNĀMEH

By

SIR J. C. COYAJEE

*Late Principal, Presidency College, Calcutta*

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TO  
THE MEMORY OF  
PROF. A. V. WILLIAMS JACKSON  
WHOSE GENEROUS APPRECIATION  
ENCOURAGED MY IRANIAN STUDIES

یاد باد آنکه نهایت نظری با ما بود  
رقم مهر نو بر چهره ما پیدا بود  
(Hafiz)



## INTRODUCTION

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When the Governing Body of the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute did me the honour of electing me as the Government Fellowship Lecturer for the year 1938 they also indulged me as regards the choice of my subject for these lectures. I have been thus favoured with another opportunity of studying the great Iranian Epic, the large mass of myths and legends which underlies it, and the points of contact of that Epic with the legends and literature of some other countries.

The process of evolution and formation of the Iranian Epic has occupied several centuries, reckoning only from the beginning of the work on the Bāstān-nāmeḥ, and a couple of millennia and more if we include the earlier portions of the Yashts. During this long period the Iranian race has come into historical and geographical contact with many other races—the Sakas, the Chinese, the Hittites, the Greeks and even the Celts of Asia Minor. Naturally this contact and the notable incidents attending it found their echoes in the Iranian epic and left their mark on it. In my earlier study of the *Cults and Legends of Ancient Iran and China* I have attempted to show that several important characters and episodes of the Shāh-

nāmeḥ have their parallels in well-known heroes and legends of ancient China. The similarities are very close, indeed, and show how far Firdausi was true to, and succeeded in conveying, the old tradition before him even without suspecting its true significance. Similarly in that volume I have discussed the problem of the contacts of the legend of (Azi) Dahāk with the mythology of Babylonia and of old Greece. To quote the words of one of the eminent *savants* who did me the honour of reviewing my work favourably "one is convinced once more about Firdausi's amazing reliability down to the finest details. Individual words and specific expressions disclose vibrations, the true meaning of which the great poet himself surely did not suspect."

The object of the present work, which forms a companion volume to the former book, has been to contribute further to the study of that large body of Iranian and foreign legends and mythology, which forms the ground work of the Shāhnāmeḥ and which endows that epic with much of its charm. Thus in the essay on "the Iranian Odyssey" we find that not only valuable reminiscences of conditions of civilization in the old Hittite land (pp. 197-206) but also some very significant names and epic motifs of that country (pp. 207-216) have been preserved in the Iranian epic. The episode might also throw some much needed light on the topic of the date of Zarathushtra (pp. 218-219).

We may turn from the cultural contacts of old Irān and the Hittite country to study an important chapter in the history of the literature of the world, *viz.* the influence exerted by the great mass of Iranian legends and tradition upon the poetry and romance of Europe in the Middle Ages. The influence of Celtic tradition and legends in this direction has received ample recognition. It remains to obtain the same recognition for Iranian romance, epic and tradition—the last being represented by Mithraism. Thus, Miss Weston—who notes that the problem falls within the field of Comparative Religion—seeks for the ‘Secret of the Grail’ in the mysteries of Adonis. Dr. Nitze would have us resort to the Eleusinian mysteries for the origins of the Grail; while Mr. R. S. Loomis would point to the myths of Samothrace as the source. No one can help admiring the learning and skill with which these theories have been expounded. But surely if we are to resort to mysteries and to sidereal cults in order to seek an explanation of the Grail Quest, then the presumption is all in favour of Mithraism which had its great mysteries, which was the greatest of all sidereal or solar cults, and which dominated for centuries those very lands in which the Grail legend was to attain its unrivalled popularity. On its progress towards the West Mithraism must also have been accompanied by some at least of the allied Iranian traditions—in particular by the closely related cult of the Royal Glory (*Hvarenō*) and of the heroes who bore it.

I have sought, in the first place, to show in the second essay that there are a great many similar and parallel features in the cult of the Holy Grail and that of the "Royal Glory", and that the Iranian legends might be advisedly utilised in the task of discovering 'the Secret of the Grail'.

In the final sections of this essay I have gone a little further—to show that the cults of Mithra and of "Royal Glory" had a parallel development in old Irān and India, and that light might be shed on the problems of the Grail by a study of the Vedas and the Indian epics. To put it briefly, the thesis of this lecture is that there was a common mass of Aryan legends on the subject of the Grail or "Royal Glory" which has imparted a striking similarity to the Iranian traditions (in the *Mihir Yasht*, the *Zamyād Yasht* and the *Shāhnāmeḥ*) to the allied Indian myths and to the Legend of the Holy Grail.

In the fourth essay in the present volume ("the Round Table of Kai Khusrau") the comparison of the *Shāhnāmeḥ* with other epics is continued. An attempt is made to describe the factors and circumstances to which the various Round Tables in literary history owe their origins (pp. 140-145). The heroes of the Iranian Round Table are discussed, their position in the epic and in the older texts is compared and they are also occasionally compared with similar heroes of other epics (pp. 147-160). Some account is given of the achievements of the central figure of

that Round Table—always a difficult matter which put the powers of the bard to a severe test when dealing with characters like Kai Khusrau, Arthur or Charlemagne. On the one hand, it was not desirable to give undue prominence to the personal achievements of the central figure, since to do so would be to belittle the other heroes. On the other hand, it was impossible to make the chief of such a circle of formidable knights a mere *roi faineant*. Here again there was scope for a comparison of epics (pp. 130-134, 176-178). Space also had to be found for discussing the topic of Kai Khusrau's voyage, since both Spiegel and Nöldeke had pointed out the geographical difficulties relating to it. Lastly, it is shown that there has been a tendency to transfer the exploits of several other heroes of the Round Table (like Tūs) to the favoured hero—Gudarz. To this tendency the supersession of Gawain by Perceval and Galahad as regards knightly importance furnishes a parallel.

In the "Riddle of Isfandiār," the same topic is continued. For when we compare the narratives in the Avesta and in the Shāhnāmeḥ we find that in the latter the real exploits of Vishtāsp (Gushtāsp) and Zairivairi (Zarir) are transferred to Isfandiār. Dr. Alfred Nutt has noted that "the subordination of all else in the story to the one hero is a marked characteristic of the Arthurian romance"; and that the Celtic poetic tradition was distinguished by "the glorification of the individual hero". The episodes of Isfandiār, Gudarz and Rustam show that Iranian poesy possess-

ed this characteristic in no less a degree than the Celtic romance.

Coming to refer to the essay on "the Zamyād Yasht and the Iranian epos" I might be permitted to point out the great importance of that Yasht to ethnologists and historians as one of the most ancient and comprehensive documents dealing with the history, ideals and migrations of the Aryan peoples (pp. 257-267). It is also a text of high importance to students of Sociology and Politics, as dealing with the subject of the Divine King and as pointing the way to the doctrine of the Divine Right of Kings (pp. 281-299). In a sense it formed the fountain-head of the Iranian epic and it exerted a great influence on the Shāhnāme (pp. 288-289). I have attempted to discuss these topics to the best of my humble abilities. I might add that I had sent the first draft of this essay to the late Prof. A. V. Williams Jackson, and that he generously encouraged me to develop that sketch, since "it correctly points out the underlying thought of this important Yasht and relates it to the whole Iranian culture".

I have had to leave the first essay contained in this volume for the last place in this preface, since it does not deal with the epic aspect of Shāhnāme. And yet it has been a most interesting task to trace the religious and philosophical opinions expressed by the poet in it—we might call them Firdausi's *obiter dicta*—to their source. A careful study of the religious

and philosophical disquisitions in the epic will lead to the conclusion that they can be traced directly to Pahlavi works, and indeed, that in many cases the poet has merely paraphrased the texts—though with exquisite poetic skill. A great deal of the philosophy of the Sasanian age has been transmitted to us by the genius of Firdausi rendered into excellent poetry. He was thus the representative and the successor not only of the Pahlavi historical tradition but of Pahlavi philosophical speculation.

I am indebted to Mr. K. E. Punegar, B.A., for his valuable assistance in correction of proofs and to Mr. H. T. Anklesaria for his willing promptitude in bringing out the work.

J. C. COYAJEE.

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## THEOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY IN FIRDAUSI

In this essay an attempt will be made to examine the religious teaching of Firdausi on topics like the Divine Nature, Cosmogony and Creation, as also some of his philosophical and ethical dicta. Our aim is not merely to quote his views on these points but to correlate them with the very similar or even identical views in Pahlavi works extant. It will be found that Firdausi drew markedly and continuously on these works for his philosophical and religious ideas, and that he had either read them himself or had some of the writings interpreted for him. We shall find him on occasions even hinting at some author or authors from whom he drew his inspiration. The probability is that he knew a fair amount of Pahlavi himself, though a contrary opinion has been expressed by high authority. Further, we shall also find that Firdausi is the representative and the successor not only of the Pahlavi historical tradition but also of its philosophical speculations and views; that Firdausi was indeed happy in working in the mine of Sassanide history and mythology and philosophy, but that, on the other hand, Sassanide theology and philosophy were fortunate in finding in Firdausi such a brilliant poetic exponent and interpreter.

So far no attempt has been made to put together

the positive teaching of Firdausi on the subject of religion, although a fair amount has been said regarding his attitude towards Zoroastrianism, Islam and other religions. That he was an admirer and apologist of the old faith of Iran has been universally admitted. Thus the great Nöldeke has observed that if we put a literal interpretation on many of Firdausi's verses he may be taken to have an animus against Islam (*Grundriss der Iranischen Philologie*, Vol. II, pp. 161-162). As regards Christianity some of his dicta are favourable while others are of a critical character to say the least. With respect to the old faith of Iran, Dr. Nöldeke was of opinion that the poet could not be called an avowed Mazdayasna though he had a romantic leaning towards an idealised and rationalised Magianism. With these general remarks coming from such an authoritative source one can agree.

We may now come to our own proper task—that of making a somewhat detailed study of the poet's religious beliefs—ascertaining the sources of the positive teaching of Firdausi about the Divine Nature, his doctrine of Wisdom, his account of the creation of the Firmament and of the Stars, of Man and animals. The portions of the Shāhnāme referred to will consist of the poet's introduction to the Shāhnāme, and the religio-philosophical discussions at the courts of Kings Behram Gor, Naushirwān and Khusrau Parviz as reproduced in that epic. As regards individual literary Pahlavi sources of Firdausi's inspiration in Theology and Philosophy, it will be suggested

that most probably he knew of the *Dina-i Mainog-i Khirad*. There will be also many parallels between the dicta of Firdausi and statements in the *Dādistan-i Dinik* or the *Shikand Gumanik Vijār*. We shall find ample reason to attribute a direct knowledge to Firdausi of some at least of these particular works. He may however have also known some other works now lost to us, which contained Pahlavi traditions on a sufficiently large scale and with adequate range.

### THE DIVINE NATURE

On the subject of the nature of God Firdausi says but little, but what little he says is eminently eloquent and reasonable and well-grounded on the Pahlavi tradition and texts. It is, he emphasises, not possible to know or to praise God adequately as He deserves, and all we can do is to confess His existence and to render Him service :

به هستیش باید که خستو شوی ز گفتار بیکار یکسو شوی

i.e. you should admit or confess the existence of God and avoid useless discussion. In a word the poet recommends confession of Theism and obedience to God *sans phrase*. We notice here that the word *خستو* employed by Firdausi for confession corresponds to the Pahlavi word *Khustivan* used for confession in *Mainog-i Khirad* (ch. 2, s. 69) and elsewhere. The reasons for this paucity of our knowledge of God are thus stated by the poet : God cannot be seen ; and what man cannot see, his twin faculties of Wisdom and Soul cannot help him to understand.

Firdausi thus starts by rejecting the anthropomorphic conception of God, and here he falls into a line, from the start, with the Pahlavi writers who had written copiously and exhaustively on the subject. The poet's dictum is :

به بینندگان افریننده را نه بینی مرئیان دو بیننده را  
(With your eyes you cannot see the Creator ; hence you need not trouble your eyes to try to do so.)

With this statement let us compare the ample exposition on the topic provided in Pahlavi works. To begin with, we read the *Dādistan-i Dinik*, chapter 19, verses 2-4. There we are told that the form of Auharmazd "as a spirit among the spirits" is not completely visible except through wisdom. Then that work deals with the problem whether Zarathushtra himself had seen God, and answers the query by saying that "a resemblance of His power was seen when Zarathushtra saw the result of his handiwork." That the idea was widely spread among the Pahlavi writers and well-known, can also be seen from the train of argument in the fifth chapter of the *Shikand Gumanik Vijār*. There we read in sections 46-47 that "the knowledge of the existence of Him who is the exalted sacred being...is through the inevitable and analogy *visible before the sight of wisdom*"—a dictum which implies that God is invisible to the human eye. That work lays down exactly the same doctrine as our poet—that even our reason can tell us no more than that God exists. For in sections 5 and 6 of the same chapter it is laid down

that "comprehending the sacred being through undecayed understanding, fervent intellect and decisive wisdom is not more than knowing that a sacred being exists." And it is finally asserted that it is for the philosopher to demonstrate the existence of the invisible (God) from visible (facts) (*Ib.* s. 27).

It might, however, be contended by some critic that the poet was only following the lead of the Mu'tazalites in opposing Anthropomorphism. Now it is true that the famous Al-Jahm and other Mu'tazilah denied anthropomorphic ideas about God. But Firdausi's views on the subject differ materially from those of the Mu'tazilahs in two very important respects. The poet restricts the knowledge of God obtainable by man strictly to His existence; while the Mu'tazilahs accept seven attributes of God as within human cognition. These seven attributes are that He is *فاعل* (worker), *خالق* (creator), *مجيد* (investing), *ميت* (killing), *حي* (enlivening), *قديم* (eternal) and *قدير* (all-powerful). Now had Firdausi been a Mu'tazilah, he would have surely mentioned some at least of these attributes in the introduction which he devotes to the laudation of God. But even these attributes, so highly esteemed by the Mu'tazilahs, are conspicuous by their absence in the poet's treatment. In the second place, the Mu'tazilites maintained that "the knowledge of God is *within the province of reason*"; while the position taken up by Firdausi is just the opposite of this :

نباید بدو نیز اندیشه راه که او بر تر از نام و از جایگاه.

خرد را اوجان را همی سنجد او      در اندیشه سنجه کی گنجد او  
خرد گر سخن بر گزیند همی      همانرا گزیند که بیند همی

(Our thought cannot reach God who is more exalted than the categories of name and locality. He weighs the Intellect and Soul, and hence he cannot be contained in the balance of Intellect or Reason; since the intellect can speak only about things which can be seen). As opposed to this the Mu'tazilite position is well represented by a quotation from Ash-Shahristani's *Milal wa'n Nihal* (ERE VI, 301) which denies the existence of eternal divine attributes: "They deny the existence of any eternal attribute as distinct from His nature..... Knowledge, life, power are part of His Essence; otherwise if they were looked upon as eternal attributes of the Deity, it would give rise to a multiplicity of eternal entities. They maintained also that *the knowledge of God is within the province of reason.*"

### THE DOCTRINE OF WISDOM

Coming to the doctrine of Wisdom we shall have quite a number of individual parallelisms to point out between the *Shāhnāme* and the *Dinā-i Mainog-i Khirad*. But before going into that subject a general remark may be permitted. There are no works—except the above Pahlavi book and the philosophical and theological portions of our epic—where the predominance given to Wisdom is so great. In other works, the creation of Wisdom is the starting point of creation as well as of religious discussion. But here Wisdom

is both the Alpha and the Omega of these doctrines. Wisdom creates the world and rules it. All moral perfections are only aspects of Wisdom. Above all, the highest praise—indeed a sort of *worship*—is to be paid to Wisdom.

It is also necessary to point out that in two places *Firdausi* refers to a certain anonymous writer on the topic of Wisdom from whom he avowedly draws his inspiration. He also adds that he could have written much more from the same source had it been suitable or necessary :

چه گفت آن خردمند مرد خرد      که دانا ز گفتار او بر خورد

The poet adds further :

شنیدم ز دانا دگر کوه زین      چه دانیم راز جهان افرین

[(Let us see) what that wise Man of Wisdom has said from which the judicious can benefit.....I have heard from that man of Wisdom other things besides this ; but what do we know of the mysteries or secrets of God ?]

Now obviously the author of the *Dina-i Mainog-i Khirad* answers well to these specifications. He is anonymous and, so far as Iran was concerned, the main writer on Wisdom, and hence entitled to be styled the *مرد خرد* *par excellence*; and he has many other dicta which being laden with Zoroastrian theology could not be reproduced by the poet in the prevailing circumstances of his day.

## (a) THE CULT OF WISDOM

With these observations we come to the task of comparing the dicta of Firdausi and of the Pahlavi writers on the spirit of Wisdom. The parallelism is so close that we shall have to take almost every couplet of the Introduction of Firdausi and re-produce the corresponding Pahlavi text. At first, let us take the personification of the Spirit of Wisdom in both, and the necessity of praising and *venerating* it with the object of securing its guidance and protection. Thus the poet sings :

خرد بهتر از هر چه ایزد داد      ستایش خرد را به از راه داد  
 خرد را و جان را که یاردستود      و گهرمن ستایم که یارد شنود  
 خرد رهنمای و خرد دلکشای      خرد دست گیرد بهر دوسرای

(Wisdom is better than anything else given to us by God. To glorify and pay homage to wisdom justly is the most excellent thing. But who can glorify Wisdom and the Soul properly ? and even if I did so, what ear has power to listen to that praise ?)

This passage about glōrifying Wisdom is best understood in the light of what is said in the *Dina-i Mainog-i Khirad* (chapter I, sections 53-61) : " For the spirit of Wisdom one is to perform more *homage and service* than for the remaining archangels.....and thenceforward he became more diligent in performing the ceremonial of the spirit of Wisdom. After that, the spirit of Wisdom displayed his person unto him. And he spoke to him thus : ' O friend and *glorifier*, seek

advancement from me, the spirit of Wisdom, that I may become thy guide to the satisfaction of the sacred beings and the good, and to the maintenance of the body in the worldly existence and the preservation of the soul in the spiritual one'." This passage is obviously the best commentary upon our poet's adoration of the Spirit of Wisdom which is shown to be identical with the archangel Vohuman, for that Archangel presides both over the *Asno Khratu* and *Gaoshu-srut Khratu*.

It is when we see that Wisdom is identical with the archangel Vohuman that we know why Firdausi speaks as if he was preaching some *esoteric or mystic doctrine*:

بگفتار داندگان راه جوی      بگیتی بیوی و به هر کس مگوی  
(Seek guidance from the writings of the wise and walk in the world but *do not tell all and sundry about that Wisdom*.)

He also adds:

حکیم! چو کس نیست گفتن چه سود

(O philosopher when there is no one to appreciate the homage to Wisdom what is the good of this talk about Wisdom?)

The poet is aware that throughout his theological excursion he is on delicate ground—particularly in the section on Wisdom. For as soon as he gets to the end of his philosophising and comes to other matter, he disclaims all credit for novelty of view:

سخن هر چه گفتم همه گفته اند      بر باغ معنی همه رفته اند

But apart from that apologetic pronouncement, he writes as one constantly liable to misinterpretation and misunderstanding, as one always afraid of giving a full exposition of his views and doctrines. He refers to authorities without definitely naming them and as far as possible keeps on his guard and, as it were, on the defensive.

### (b) RELATION OF WISDOM TO SOUL AND BODY

Like the Pahlavi texts, Firdausi devotes some space to a consideration of the relations of Wisdom to the Soul and Body as well as to particular bodily organs. Thus we read in *Mainog-i Khirad* that "for the maintenance of the body and preservation of the soul what is good and more perfect" is Wisdom (chapter I, sections 44-45); and again that one who is sound-eyed but without Wisdom is *worse than blind* (chapter 26, section 6). Firdausi paraphrases these ideas thus :

نخست آفرینش خرد را شناس      نکهبان جانست و او ناسپاس

خرد چشم جانست چون بنگری      تو بیچشم شادان جهان نسیری

(Wisdom, which is the first created being, is the maintainer of the Soul even though the latter is ungrateful. Wisdom is, when properly regarded, the eye of the body without which it cannot conveniently pass through the world.) Then again in the *Shikand Gumanik Vijār*, the soul is said to be endowed with five spiritual appliances (including Wisdom) and five physical appliances—the eye, the ear, the nose, the

mouth and the skin. This, too, is to be found in our poet :

سیاس تو گوش است و چشم و زبان کزین سه رسد نیک و بد بیگمان  
(You—Wisdom—are indebted to the ear, the eye and the tongue through which the Knowledge of good and evil reaches you.)

Finally, Firdausi rises to great poetic heights, when he asserts that if you observe things from the branches of the tree of Knowledge, you will find that the sphere of Wisdom is unlimited :

چو دیدار یابی ز شاخ سخن بدانی که دانش نیاید بین

This reminds us of the equally poetic notion that the religion of knowledge and Wisdom “ is like *an immense tree* of which there are one stem, two branches and three boughs ” (*Shikand Gumanik Vijār*, chapter I, sections 11 and 12). Here again the poet keeps very closely in touch with the Pahlavi tradition and even phraseology.

### (c) FUNCTION OF WISDOM IN CREATION

It is also important to note how and why this doctrine of Wisdom forms a necessary preliminary to the poet's account of the creation of the firmament and the stars, of the elements and man. Obviously, Firdausi meant to make Wisdom the pivot and *main agency of the whole process of creation*. Thus he argues that Wisdom is indeed the *source of all life and is itself the first created being* :

خرد زنده جاودانی شناس خرد مایه زندگانی شناس

نخست افرینش خرد را شناس      نگهبان جانست و او نا سپاس

We have already seen how the poet relates Wisdom to the functions of the human body. But he adds that Wisdom as the source of all substances has much to do also with the ordering and movements of the planets and stars. For the seven planets dominate the twelve signs of the Zodiac and determine the fate of the man of Wisdom by rewarding him according to his deserts :

ز آغاز باید که دانی دوست      سرمایه گوهراں از نخست  
 ابر دو و ده هفت شد که خدای      گرفتند هر یک سزاوار جای  
 و زو بخشش و دادن آمد پدید      ببخشید داننده را چون سزید

This may well have been taken from the statement in the *Mainog-i Khirad* (chapter I, sections 11 and 12) that "He who is the all-good Creator, created these creatures through Wisdom, and his maintenance of the invisible revolutions (of the spheres and heavenly bodies) is through Wisdom." The same work adds that "Auharmazd has produced these creatures and creation, which are in the worldly existence through innate wisdom and the management of the worldly and spiritual existences is also through Wisdom" (*Ib.*, sections 49-50). Moreover the twelfth chapter of the same work argues that worldly treasure is not allotted so truly as spiritual on account of Aharman's chieftains, the seven planets. We may add further that the word used by Firdausi *خدای* is the translation of the word used in the same connection in the *Dina-i*

*Mainog-i Khirad* (Pt. III, p. 38), viz., "Sipah-pat".

### THE HUMAN SOUL

In the very first line of the Epic the poet calls God the Lord of Wisdom as well as of the human soul :

بنام خداوند جان و خرد

This juxtaposition of the human soul and of Wisdom from the start might be something of a puzzle at first sight, especially as Firdausi talks of man's appearance on earth much later—and after the appearance of the lower animals :

چو زین بگذری مردم آمد دیدید شد این بندها را سرا سر کلید

But then we remember that in the Avesta the spiritual world is created before the material world (Yasna 46.6). In Yasna 31.11 Zarathushtra says that the Daena was created before bodily physical existence, and therefore spiritual life and Wisdom (or the poet's *جان و خرد*) take precedence of material creation. In fact, they are the primordial Spiritual Existences. In both Earlier and Later Avesta, the spiritual creation takes precedence of material creation. Thus Visparad 7.4 honours the true creations that were made before the Heaven, waters, etc. For other Avesta references regarding the earlier creation of spiritual existences, I would refer the reader to Lommel "*Die Religion Zarathushtras*", pp. 144 *et seq.*

But then the question will be asked—how Firdausi could know of this Avesta doctrine? The answer is that he could obtain the idea from Pahlavi works like

*Dina-i Mainog-i Khirad* (chapter 49, section 22) and the *Dūdistan-i Dinik* (chapter 28, section 7). There it is observed that the guardian spirit or Fravashis of all human beings "from Gayomard the propitious to Soshans the triumphant" were created first. Hence the poet places together the human soul and Wisdom as coeval in creation in a sense. Hence also he calls the human soul "the *first* in nature but the *last* in calculation" and warns man to take himself seriously:

نخستین فطرت پسین شمار توئی خویشان را بیازی مدار

Thus, as regards the creation of his Fravashi, man is among the *first* in creation, but he is the *last* as regards bodily appearance on this earth. For, according to Firdausi, the order of such appearance on earth is as follows—fire, water, plant, cattle and, last of all, man. That order of appearance is almost the same as that expounded in the *Dina-i Mainog-i Khirad* (chapter 49, section 11): "And water, fire, plant and cattle germs are created for the increase of man germs." The poet adds that, since man possesses Wisdom and understanding, his function is to control other animals:

پذیرندهٔ هوش و رای و خرد مرا و را ددو دام فرمان آبرد

If anything further was needed to convince us how closely the poet follows the Pahlavi tradition about creation, it could be found in the following passage of the *Shikand Gumanik Vijār* (chapter X, sections 11-18): "Then he (man) is not able to under-

stand Him (God) as the creator through his nature .....For when He bore the name of creator, then, with it, he brought these three creations—creation, religion and *soul* ..... And the duty of the creatures is to understand and perform the will of the creator, and to abstain from what is disliked by Him " (S. B. E. Vol. XXIV, p. 166). *Here is indeed a complete paraphrase of the whole first paragraph of the Epic in a Pahlavi work.*

### AN ASTRAL RELIGION

It might be observed that in the eye of Firdausi one of the chief merits of the old religion of Iran was its astral aspect. In the reply of Khusrau Parviz to the Roman ambassadors the former boasts that his religion taught all loyalty and wisdom and moderation and also had due regard to astral aspects of a faith:

همه داد و راست و شرم است و مهر      نگه کردن اندر شمار سپهر

There are certainly important aspects of the Iranian religious belief which deserve to be called a Sidereal Religion. Thus Mithraism can certainly claim to be the greatest and most important sidereal cult that the world has seen. And in Zoroastrian cosmogony, the stars play a most important part and there are cults connected with several of the stars. For a brief account of the important place occupied by the stars in the Zoroastrian Cosmogony, the reader might be referred to chapter 49 of the *Dina-i Mainog-i Khirad*—a chapter which is also of high value for Firdausi's own beliefs about the stars.

## (a) STARS

The mention of the Stars and the firmaments in Firdausi's scheme of cosmogony is particularly important on account of the belief that human destiny depended upon them. Thus Firdausi emphasises that it is the rapidly-moving Firmament which gives rise to new and wondrous events; he adds that the seven (planets?) became lords over the twelve (constellations) and each one of these took up its exact position :

یدید آمد این گنبد نیز رو شکفتی نمایند نو بنو  
ابر دو و دم هفت شد که خدای گرفتند هر يك سزاوار جای

It is of particular interest to explain the latter line in the light of two separate passages in the *Dina-i Mainog-i Khirad*. According to the account given in that work, chapter 8, sections 17-20, the "seven" mentioned by Firdausi refers to the seven planets. We are told that "every good and the reverse which happen to mankind happen through the seven planets and the twelve constellations. And those twelve constellations are such as in revelation are the twelve chieftains on the side of Auharmazd ..... Those seven planets pervert every creature and creation and deliver them up to death and every evil." This paragraph of the Pahlavi work mentions the "twelve" (constellations) and the "seven" (planets) but makes the "twelve" the chieftains as they overrule the evil influence of the "seven" planets.

But there is another passage of the *Mainog-i-*

*Khiraḍ* which gives us another interpretation of the "seven" in the epic, and make these "*seven*" the *real chieftains* ruling the skies. In chapter 49, sections 16-21, it is stated that the constellation Great Bear (*Haptok-ring*) which consists of seven stars performs the functions of keeping back fiends and demons from the constellations of the Zodiac. Hence the twelve constellations are supposed to proceed by the power and help of the "*Haptok-ring*," and every one of them "begs protection from the *Haptok-ring*". It is in this sense as explained by the *Mainog-i Khiraḍ* that we can explain Firdausi's expression regarding "the *seven* being the lords of the *twelve*". This may well have been the original tradition from which Firdausi—even perhaps without fully understanding the ancient idea—might have derived his notion of "the seven governing the twelve" (cf. Siroza Yasht, II. 13).

#### (b) THE CELESTIAL SPHERE

Along with his contemporaries and indeed, along with the greatest minds among his contemporaries, Firdausi was inclined to the belief in Astrology as well as in Astral mysticism. Some of his finest utterances consist of addresses to or descriptions of the heavens. One of those gems is contained in the Introduction of the *Shāhnāmeḥ*. It tells of the Firmament which showers on men alike blessings and misfortunes; to which no revolutions of time can cause attrition, nor can weariness in revolving weaken it; it needs no rest from the labours of its revolutions, nor can it suffer decay like us mortals. So illuminated by stars

and so brilliant it is, that it reminds us of a garden lit up for the Naoroz :

نکه کن بر این گنبد تیز کرد      که درمان ازو یست وزو یست درد  
 نه گشت زما، بفرسایدش      نه این رنج و تیمار بگذایدش  
 نه از گردش ارام گیرد همی      نه چون ما تباهی پذیرد همی  
 بچندین فروغ و بچندان چراغ      بیاراسته چون بنو روز باغ

Now this splendid description has not only a history but a *theological dogma behind it*—the doctrine of *Zervān* (or time) which was one of the deities of old Iran. Obviously the notions of Time and the Sky are closely connected, since it is the revolutions of the Sky that measure time. Hence, we are not surprised that Firdausi borrows once more from the *Dinā-i Mainog-i Khirad* a description of *Zervān* and applies it to the Sky : "Unlimited time is undecaying and immortal, painless and hungerless, thirstless and undisturbed ; and for ever and ever-lasting no one is able to seize upon it, or make it non-predominant as regards its own affairs" (chapter VIII, section 9). Thus that Zervanism, which was incorporated in Pahlavi works like the *Bundehesh* and the *Mainog-i Khirad*, was passed on as a legacy to Firdausi which he paraphrased poetically, applying it to the Heavens which have such a close affinity to Time. It is a striking demonstration of the *power of the true poet to take up a theological dogma and to transform it into brilliant verse*.

In the same Introduction to the Epic, our poet

gives an account of the material of which the Sky is constructed, an idea which can be traced not only to a Pahlavi work but beyond it to the Avesta. Thus he observes that the Sky is composed and made up, not of wind or of water, nor of dust or smoke (as has been erroneously supposed by some), but of red ruby:

ز یاقوت سرخ است چرخ کبود      نه از باد و آب و نه از گرد و دود

That notion comes again from the *Mainog-i Khirad* (chapter IX, section 7) which informs us that "the sky is made from the substance of the ruby such as they also call diamond (*almāst*)". The notion can be traced back further to the Farvardin Yasht (section 3) which can vie easily even with the poetry of Firdausi in its description of the Sky: "It looks like a palace, that stands built of a heavenly substance, firmly established, with ends that lie afar, *shining in its body of ruby*." If Firdausi compares the sky to a beautifully lit garden, the Yasht likens it to the palace surrounded by it. Here is another proof that the religious and philosophical teaching of Firdausi has its roots lying deep in the ancient beliefs of Iran. And here we come across another reason for our view that *Firdausi relied more on the Dinā-i Mainog-i Khirad than on other Pahlavi works*. For the *Dādistan-i Dinik* (chapter 91) contains another very fine, poetic and elaborate account of the nature of the Sky. But the poet follows the shorter treatment given in the work earlier mentioned, according to what seems to have been his usual practice.

A reference might be made here to the brilliant

apostrophe to the Heavens which comes much later in the Shāhnāmeḥ and in which the poet, while thanking the skies for the happiness which fell to his lot in his youth, complains of the troubles which have come over him in his old age. Upon this, the Heavens remind Firdausi *that he is the happier and the superior one of the two* since he can learn lessons in Wisdom and virtue—a capacity denied even to the Heavens:

الا ای براورده چرخ بلند      چه داری به پیری مرا مستمند  
چو بودم جوان خوشروان داشتی      به پیری مرا خوار بگذاشتی  
چنین داد پاسخ سپهر بلند      که ای مرد گوینده بی گزند  
تو از من مهر باره برتری      روان را بدانش همی پروری  
خورو خواب و رای نشستن تراست      به نیک و بید راه جستن تراست

Perhaps a hint for this apostrophe might have been found in chapter XXVIII of the *Dinā-i Mainog-i Khirad* where three questions are asked by a sage and answered by the spirit of Wisdom. The questions are: "What is stronger? What is swifter? What is happier?" The responses are that *though the Celestial sphere is the stronger, the human intellect is the swifter and the soul of the wise and virtuous man is the happier*. Here again the proverbial philosophy of the Sassanian age is transformed by the genius of Firdausi into rich poetry.

(c) THE MOTIONS OF THE SUN AND THE MOON

On closing his description of the Firmament,

our poet enters upon a description of the reasons for the creation of the Sun and the Moon. According to him these heavenly bodies were created with the object of illuminating the Earth and, incidentally, to provide means for an exact calculation of periods of time. For he emphasised the *exactitude* with which the Sun and the Moon proceed in their respective movements so that neither gains on, or passes, the other :

نگیرند مر یکدگر را گذر      نباشد ازین يك ووش راست تر

The same ideas of illumination of the earth and calculation of time may be found in the *Dinā-i Mainog-i Khirad* (chapter 49, sections 24-27) : " And the motion of the Sun and the Moon is the special illumination of the world.....And the correct keeping of the day, month and year, summer and winter, spring and autumn and other calculations and accounts of all kinds which men ought to obtain, perceive and understand, which are more fully defined by means of the setting of the Sun and the Moon."

It might be mentioned here that while the observations of Firdausi on the topic of the Sun and the Moon are of a poetic character, they are not closely connected, and show traces of having been put down with some haste. In particular a fine and dramatic address to the Sun seems to have been here begun only and not proceeded with any further. The account seems to have been written in the old age of the poet when misfortunes began to shower on him and to embitter his life. It is quite in the tragic style

of his latter days and complains why the Sun has ceased to shine on him :

الا ای که نو آفتابی همی چه شد تا که برمن تنابی همی

With this may be compared the apostrophe to the Heavens already cited before—which is apparently composed amidst the same surroundings, but preserved for us complete in the Shāhnāmeḥ—and complaining to the sky as to why it gave happiness to him in his youth and reserved only misery for him in his old age.

#### FIRDAUSI'S ANGELOLOGY

In one way or other all the leading members of the Angelology of old Iran figure in the Shāhnāmeḥ. Of course the chief place is occupied by Sarosh. It is Sarosh who guides the actions of the King Feridun in his struggle with Dahāka, and who endows the former with the occult power necessary to overcome the magic of his opponent. It is Sarosh who secures the victory of Kai Khusrau when the fort of the magicians—Bahman Dez—was taken. The same angel instructs Kai Khusrau to renounce the throne in order to ascend to heaven. The life of Khusrau Parviz was also saved from the onslaught of Bahram Chobin by the intercession of Sarosh. This predominance of the angel Sarosh in the epic is due to the noteworthy fact that even in the Islamic period, Iran could not forget an angel to whom it had manifested such devotion for untold ages. Even the poet Sa'adi was constrained to speak of Sarosh as the "auspicious one" :

ترا یادری کرد فرخ سروش

Later on, in the lyric pages of Hāfiz, we find Sarosh restored to the same sacred prominence that he had enjoyed with Firdausi :

ز فکر تفرقه باز آی تا شوی مجموع      بحکم آنکه چو شد اهرمن سروش آمد

In the epic, an almost equally important member of the old angelology is Fire. The scene of the rendezvous of the seven heroes who defied Afrāsiyāb later by entering his own hunting ground is laid at Rawand where the "guiding fire of Meher Burzin still shines forth":

کجا آ در مهر برزین کنون      بدانجا فروزد همی رهنمون

It is the angel of fire who inspires the successful search for and capture of Afrāsiyāb; and to whom Bahram Gor and Khusrau Parviz attribute their successes.

The above are matters of common knowledge; but it has not been yet emphasised that in the episode of Bezan and Menijeh *Firdausi* has introduced an entire "*Āfrin*", very similar to the similar "*Āfrins*" that we possess yet, and which he might have borrowed from some Pahlavi sources as yet unknown to us. It comes nearest to the "*Āfrin-i Zartusht*", and every line of it shows a full and detailed knowledge of the old *Angelology*, as will be made evident by an examination of some of the lines. This *Āfrin* is put in the mouth of Rustam and is pronounced on King Kai Khusrau. It begins by wishing that Ahura Mazda might keep the King in his high position, and that Vohuman might guard the throne and crown :

که هر مزد بادت بدین یایکام      چو بهمن نگهدار تخت و کلام

Now this line shows the knowledge of the composer of the Āfrin that Vohuman may be brought to increase royalty or Khshathra (Ys. 31.4), that he possesses and recognises Khshathra (Ys. 44.6 and 46.16). In the next verse, the wish is expressed that the archangel Ardibehesht might be the King's guide all the year and that Bahram and Tir might protect him :

همه ساله اردیبهشت هژیر نکهبان تو باد بهرام و تیر

That reminds us that in the Gathas, Asha teaches right paths and keeps from Evil and also that the angel Bahram is his co-operator. The Āfrin goes on next to invite the archangel Shahrivar to make the King victorious and glorious :

ز شهریر بادی تو پیروزگر بنام بزرگی و فردهر

Here we have to bear in mind that the gift of Shahrivar is metal—making one both successful in war and wealthy as to his position (cf. Shāyast la Shāyast, 22.4 and 23).

Coming to speak of the archangel Asfandārmad, she is invoked to guard the King and to illuminate his soul and wisdom :

سفندارمد یاسبانت تو باد خرد جان و روشن روان تو باد

Now we find in the *Grand Bundeshesh* (chapter 64, section 25) that Asfandārmad maintains all creatures; and we learn from the *Dinkard* (Book IX, chapter 42, section 10) that she protects the souls of the righteous. We proceed next to the archangel Khurdād who is to keep the King's lands happy, as

well as to glorify the King's ancestors and progeny :

ترا باد فرخ نیاو نژاد ز خرداد بادا برو بوم شاد

We may recollect that the archangel Khurdād with his colleague Amerdād brings water on plants and thus make lands fertile (*Dinkard*, Book VII, chapter 2, section 32). Moreover the co-worker of Khurdād is Farvardin which brings in naturally the idea of the Fravashis of the royal ancestors and descendants. With the archangel Amerdād comes the blessings of the cattle of the King :

ن چار پایانت مرداد باد

For Amerdād is the archangel in charge of cattle (*Dinkard*, Book 9, chapter 41, section 17).

There are also mentioned general blessings through Ābān and Dai. But enough has been said to prove Firdausi's accurate knowledge of the functions and character of the angelology of the Avesta. As has been said above, the poet has either included in the poem an "Āfrin" which existed in his day or has composed one himself. Of these two hypotheses the former one appears to be the more probable. It may well be, if the former is the case, that this fine Āfrin was part and parcel of the beautiful old Iranian ballad of *Bejan and Menijeh*, which Firdausi has avowedly and bodily incorporated in his epic (cf. my *Cults and Legends of Ancient Iran and China*, pp. 202-206).

#### FIRDAUSI'S DEMONOLOGY

If the Angelology of Firdausi is derived from Avesta and Pahlavi works so is his Demonology ; and

here we can directly and conclusively trace his obligations. Thus in the colloquy between King Naushirwan and his minister Buzarchimehr the latter remarks that there are ten demons which subdue a man's soul and his wisdom. The first of them are Greediness (*Āz*) and Want (*Niyāz*). They are followed by Anger, Envy, Disgrace (*Nang*) and Vindictiveness. Then comes the Causing of quarrels or slander (*Nammām*) and Double facedness. The last is Ingratitude. The King asks him further as to which is the worst of the lot and the sage replies that Greediness (*Āz*) is the worst:

بدو گفت کسری که ده دیو چیست      کزیشان خرد را بیاید گریست  
چنین داد پاسخ که آزر و نیاز      دو دیوند با زور و گردنفراس  
دگر خشم و رشک است و تنگست و کین      چونماد دو روی نا پاکدین  
دهم آنکه از کس ندارد سیاس      بنیکی وهم نیست بزدان شناس  
بدو گفت ازین شوم ده برگزند      کدامست اهریمن و زورمند  
چنین داد پاسخ بکسری که آزر      ستمگاره دیوی بود دیر ساز

Now it is noteworthy that in the *Dādistān-i Dinik* (chapter 37, sections 50-52) we have a list of demons headed by *Āz* (Greediness). Four of them—*Āz* and *Niyāz* and *Aeshm* (wrath) and *Nang* (disgrace)—are common to the Epic and to the Pahlavi work. The rest are *Mitokht* (falsehood); *Asto-vidad* (the disintegration of material beings); *Bushasp* (laziness); *Tap* (fever); *Zarman* (Decrepitude); the bad *Vāe* (which stupefies the body); *Zairich* (who poisons eatables and thus causes death) and *Nihiv* ('terror').

In section 54 of the same work, two more of Firdausi's demons are mentioned, being Slander and Envy and quarrelsomeness. That section tells us of "Slander, the deceiver, hatred and envy, besides the overpowering progress of disgrace (*Nang*), quarrelling". Thus if we put together sections 50-52 and 54 of that chapter of the *Dādistan-i Dinik* the whole list of demons mentioned by Firdausi is fully covered. Since the poet was writing a poem, and not a formal treatise on Pahlavi theology, we can well understand why he confined himself to the abstract vices in the list, and left out names like *Mitokht*, *Asto-vidad* and *Bushasp* which would have been hopelessly unfamiliar to his audience and would have merely burdened his text, besides raising further doubts about his orthodoxy. Similar ideas are also found in the *Ganj-e-Shāyigān* (section 11).

It might be mentioned that Firdausi has high authority both from Pahlavi and Avesta texts for putting *Āz* (Greediness) first as the leader of demons. Thus in the *Mainog-i Kherad* (chapter VIII), after describing the destruction of fiends at resurrection, it is said that the angels Mitro and Zravan and Rashnu will smite "in the end even Azo the demon" (S. B. E. Vol. XXIV, p. 33). In the same work (chapter II, sections 15-16) this supremacy of *Āz* is thus accounted for: the demon of greediness deceives a man, making the treasures of this world tasteless to, and those of the spirit unperceived, by men. Moreover, turning from the Pahlavi books to the Avesta texts,

we find *Āz* mentioned not only in the *Āstād Yasht* but in *Vendidad XVIII*, 45, 56, in *Yasna XVII*, 46 and *LXVII*, 22. Thus we have a long and uninterrupted Zoroastrian tradition behind Firdausi's assertion of the *primacy of Āz in the list of demons*.

The coupling of the demons *Āz* (Greediness) and *Niyāz* by Firdausi can also be accounted for from Pahlavi authority; and it might be noted here that Firdausi couples the two demons in various places. This juxtaposition of the two demons is accounted for in the *Mainog-i Khirad* (chapter XVIII; S. B. E. XXIV, p. 50) where it is observed that men disregard both spiritual warnings and the fears of death and hell "on account of the delusiveness (*niyazanīh*) of the demon of greediness and of discontent". It is indeed obvious *prima facie* that greed and discontent go together; but Firdausi had also the authority of that Pahlavi work for his juxtaposition of the two demons.

#### PHILOSOPHIC DEBATES AT THE SASSANIDE COURT

How much Firdausi was indebted to the Pahlavi writers for his philosophical, religious and ethical ideas will appear further when we compare his account of the discussions on such topics at the courts of Bahram-i Gor and Naushirwan with extant Pahlavi works. One can say with confidence looking to his obligations to these books that on religious and philosophical matters, Firdausi was the pupil of the Pahlavi writers. The fact is that Firdausi was the heir not only of the historical tradition of Iran but also of the philosophical and ethical teaching of the Sassanide age. Thus we

may compare the discussion between the Roman ambassador and the Mobad at the court of Bahram-i Gor with chapters 40 and 55 of the *Dinā-i Mainog-i Khirad* with advantage. There the Roman ambassador puts seven questions to the Mobad of King Bahram-i Gor. They were as follows: What is within and what is without? What is infinity? What is above and what is below? What is that thing which has very many names? Who is truly wretched and despicable? The answers to these questions are that sky it is that which is "without" and the air that which is "within". It is God who is Infinite. It is heaven which is "above," and hell that is at the bottom. It is Wisdom that has many names—men calling it by the names of particular virtues. It is the astrologer who professes to count the millicns of stars in the sky who is truly contemptible, since he cannot, as a matter of fact, behold even the flight of an arrow on our earth. Very similar are the questions put in chapter 40 of the *Mainog-i Khirad*: What is brighter and what is darker? What is the fuller and what is the emptier? What is that thing which no one is able to deprive one of? What is that thing which it is not possible to buy at a price? etc. (S. B. E. XXIV, p. 79). The answers to the second, third and fourth questions are the same as in Firdausi, *viz.* Knowledge, Skill and Wisdom. As to the sky being above and the earth being below the earth (as Firdausi opines) that idea is mentioned in the same book a few pages later, *i.e.* in chapter 44, sections 9 10: "The sky is

arranged above the Earth, like an egg, by the handiwork of Auharmazd and the semblance of the Earth within the sky is just like as it were the yolk amid the egg" (S. B. E. XXIV, page 85). Then, again, the idea of the vast multiplicity of stars (mentioned in Firdausi) is emphasised in the same work, for "their number is so great" (chapter 49, section 2). In the same chapter, section 22, "the unnumbered and innumerable constellations" are mentioned. To go a little further, in chapter 57 the many functions, uses and kinds of Wisdom are mentioned (S. B. E. XXIV, pp. 98-101); so that we have a complete parallel to Firdausi's idea of Wisdom having many names and aspects.

The condemnation of the astrologers or astronomers by Firdausi might appear strange to us unless we note how often the astronomers and astrologers perverted their real knowledge and assumed to be the possessors of pretended knowledge. An interesting parallel to their condemnation by Firdausi is to be found in Dante (*Inferno*, canto XX) where the punishment of soothsayers is described in language very similar to that of Firdausi:

"Because too far beyond his sight would range,  
His eyes, his path, must now be retrograde."

Similarly in canto XXIX, Dante describes the punishment of the alchemists in hell.

After answering the questions of the Roman ambassador, the Mobad of Bahram-i Gor asks in his turn the following two questions: What act is the

really profitable one ? And what act is the most heinous ? In the epic the questions are put as follows :

چه دانی تواند در جهان سودمند که از کردش مرد گردد بلند

(What act is most profitable in the world by doing which a man becomes exalted ? Also what is the worst and most lamentable act ?)

به گیتی ز ناپاکتر کار چیست که بر کرده آن بیاید گریست

The answer to the first question is the acquisition of wisdom ; and to the second the killing of a righteous and innocent man. *The answers and even the questions are from chapters 35 and 36 of the Mainog-i Khirad* (S. B. E. XXIV, pages 70-72). In chapter 35 the question is "what act makes a man really rich ?" ; and, as in Firdausi, the answer again is the acquisition of perfection in wisdom. So also the question in chapter 36 is "Which sin is the more heinous" and among the answer is when "one distresses a righteous man" (section 24).

Nor are these the only parallelisms between Firdausi and the *Mainog-i Khirad*. In the next paragraph in the *Shāhnāmeh*, King Bahram addresses his nobles after the departure of the Roman ambassador and announces his intention of avoiding the ways not only of his father Yezdegard but of Jemshid and Kawus :

به بینید تا جم و کاوس شاه چه دیدند کز دیو جستند راه  
پدر همچنین راه ایشان گرفت ز کژی ره دیو آسان گرفت

(See why Jemshid and Kawus followed the path

of the Evil one! So also my father imitated them and through his bad nature easily followed the path of the Evil one.)

These are exactly the sentiments of the *Mainog-i Khirad* (chapter 57, section 21, S. B. E. XXIV, p. 102). "And as to Yim, Fredun, Kai-Us..... and their not attaining to religion and also as to the times when they became ungrateful to their own lord, it was on account of the little coming of wisdom unto them."

Such close, though unexpected, parallels and resemblances go far to justify Firdausi's boast of loyalty to his authorities; only we should enlarge our idea of his authorities and include among them several extant Pahlavi works.

#### THE CONCEPT OF THE SUMMUM BONUM

In all old systems of Ethics, the notion of Summum Bonum (or the highest good of which man is capable) occupies an important place, since it is the very object of virtuous life. In the system of Firdausi this Summum Bonum corresponds to the acquisition of Wisdom which is not only the ethical object of Man, but the root and trunk of which all individual virtues are only so many branches. Thus, the poet tells us, man should not give way to evil inclinations, because, if he does so, Wisdom will not even look at him—Wisdom which is the chief gift and treasure of God to the worthy and virtuous:

هوا را مبر پیش رای و خرد      کزان پس خرد سوی تو ننکرد  
خردمند را خلعت ایزد یست      سزاوار خلعت نگه کن که کبست

Again the poet tells us that the proper way to define Vice is to say that it is the opposite or contradiction of Wisdom; and also that the path of Wisdom is the best variety of all knowledge:

چنین داد پاسخ که کردار بد    بود خصم روشن روان و خرد  
چنین داد پاسخ که راه خرد    ز هر دانشی بیکمان بگذرد

Finally Firdausi goes on to inform us that Wisdom has many aspects, and that each of these aspects is a virtue. Hence Wisdom might be called and designated by the names of individual virtues like Truth, Friendship, Sagaciousness and Patience, for it is the very Crown of Virtues (*i. e.* the Summum Bonum itself):

خرد دارد ای پیر بسیار نام    رساند خرد پادشاه را بکام  
یکی مهر خواندش و دیگر وفا    خرد دور شد درد ماند و جفا  
زبان آوری راستی خواندش    بلند اختری زیر کی داندش  
کهی برد بار و کهی رازدار    که باشد سخن نزد او استوار  
تو چیزی مدان که خرد برتر است    خرد بر همه نیکوئیها سر است

Corresponding to these dicta of the poet we find in *Dinkard* (Book VI, chapter 312, Peshotan Dastur Sanjana's translation Vol. XII, p. 27) that moral heroism, sagaciousness and hopefulness for the world's progress—which are the great virtues—are but the aspects or principles of Wisdom. So also in the *Mainog-i Khirad* (chapter 35, sec. 5) that man is called the richest who is perfect in Wisdom. The same work puts Wisdom at the summit of all virtues

and observes that "for the spirit of Wisdom one is to perform more homage and service than for the remaining archangels" (chapter I, sec. 53). Here we have to note that the archangels too are essences of virtuous qualities. It is added later that "it is possible to carry out every duty and practise all virtues through Wisdom" (*Ibid.* sec. 54).

#### CLASSIFICATION AND DIFFERENTIATION OF VIRTUES AND VICES

In two places in the epic, Firdausi attempts a classification of and differentiation between virtues and vices : and it is noteworthy that on both occasions the exposition is put in the mouth of Buzurchemehr. In both cases, again, the Pahlavi source of the classification is unmistakable. Thus, when the scribe Yazdegard asks Buzurchemehr as to what are the ten secret faults or sins, he is thus answered : The first is slandering and fault-finding ; the second is envy and covetousness ; the third is inciting to strife ; the fourth is talking out-of-place ; the fifth is seeking wealth unduly and the sixth is anger. Obviously in our copies of the epic, the full list of ten is not given complete, very likely in order to avoid prolixity :

چنین داد پاسخ که باری نخست	دل از عیب جستن ببادت بست
اگر مهتری بر تو رشک آورد	چو کمتر شود او سرشک آورد
سه دیگر سخن چین دورویه مرد	بدان تا بر انگیز از آب گرد
چو گوینده کو ز هر جایگاه	سخن گفت از دور شد فروجا
پیمیزی ندارد خردمند چشم	کزو باز ماند بیچند زخمش

With this we compare a list of vices given by Bishop Casartelli from Pahlavi books. Elsewhere, we find some precepts which forbid certain vices. Thus we have: "do not slander, do not covet, do not give way to anger, be not anxious, commit no impurity, bear no envy, commit no sin through shame, indulge not in slothful sleep, do not talk out of season" (*Philosophy of the Mazdayasnian Religion*, p. 162). To a very great extent these lists coincide with that given by the poet.

The second list of sins given by Firdausi has been already given and traced to a Pahlavi source.

It has already been noted that in Firdausi many virtues are treated only as so many forms of Wisdom. He observes that Wisdom has many names—it is called by some Friendship and by others Loyalty; others call it sagacity, patience and veracity:

یکی مهر خواندش و دیگر وفا      خرد دور شد ماند درد و جفا  
 زبان آوری راستی خواندش      بلند اختری زیرکی داندش  
 کهی برد بار و کهی رازدار      که باشد سخن نزد او استوار

Now in Pahlavi works like the *Dinkard* a common method of classification of Virtues is by representing them as aspects, dependencies or "*daughters*" of Wisdom. Thus in Bk. IV, 141, 2 of the *Dinkard* we read that "the two most excellent virtues of Wisdom are liberality and love of peace." Again in *Dinkard*, II, 74, 4 virtues are classified as three pairs of "*daughters*" or dependencies of Wisdom. These six virtues are thus designated—Virtuous thought,

Courage, Industry, Contentment, Love of Wisdom and Research of Knowledge (cf. Casartelli *op. cit.* p. 150).

I think that it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that Firdausi had at least the *Dinā-i Mainog-i Khirad* before him when he was writing the Introduction to the Shāhnāmeḥ and the ethical discussion before Bahram Gor; and that he paraphrased such portions from the book as suited him. It is to be noted that both Dr. A. D. Mordtmann and Dr. E. W. West were inclined to put the probable date of the *Dinā-i Mainog-i Khirad*, some time before the Arab conquest (S. B. E. Vol. XXIV, p. xvii). Thus the work must have been well-known before the time of Firdausi; and he obviously took it as his basis for his speculations about the doctrine of Wisdom, the homage to be paid to the latter and the teaching regarding the Stars and Heavens. Other Pahlavi texts were used, either by him, or by those from whom he made his inquiries, but to a lesser extent. The only alternative hypothesis would be that all these religious and philosophical disquisitions in the Shāhnāmeḥ were to be found in the Bāstān-nāmeḥ which was of course accessible to Firdausi. But that hypothesis would reduce the *Mainog-i Khirad* to a mere paraphrase of the ethical disquisitions in the Bāstān-nāmeḥ. It would reduce the Bāstān-nāmeḥ to a philosophic treatise while accusing many of the Pahlavi works before us of gross plagiarism.

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## II

### THE LEGEND OF THE HOLY GRAIL: ITS IRANIAN AND INDIAN ANALOGUES

The most distinguished workers in the study of the cult of the Holy Grail are agreed as to the necessity of broadening the basis of their work, and of making full use of the Aryan legends in general—even those of a non-European character—if the problem of the origins of the Holy Grail is to be solved satisfactorily. Thus Miss Jessie L. Weston has emphasised admirably the need for going much farther than before to throw light on the problems of the Holy Grail: "If the study of the Grail Quest fall, as I hold it does, within the field of Comparative Religion, we can call to our aid scholars whose interest lies otherwise outside the fascinating, but to some minds perhaps superficial, realm of romantic literature . . . . . There may be some who, more at home than myself in those mysterious regions where pre-Christian touched with Christian belief, may be able to throw light on the most obscure passages through which the fascinating legend passed on its way to complete Christian Mystic Evolution" (cf. the preface to J. L. Weston's *The Quest of the Holy Grail*). Dr. J. G. von Hahn (followed by Dr. Alfred Nutt) has hinted that the motifs and incidents of the Grail Quest are to be found in the folklore of the Aryan people in

general. We note also that some at least of the stories of Merlin appear to be of Oriental origin; and, of course, "it is Merlin who constructs the Round Table after the model of its two predecessors; Merlin who reveals to the Knights of Arthur's court the presence of the Grail in Britain and the necessity for its quest". The presence of Oriental elements in the Arthurian cycle has been often suspected but has never yet been fully worked out. Thus, again, Prof. Sir John Rhys would connect the name of Arthur with that of the Indo-Iranian god *Aryaman* (*The Arthurian Legend*,\* pp. 44-45), nor is he averse to bringing in an occasional analogy from the Rig-Veda to illustrate his suggestions (*ib.* p. 267). Mr. R. S. Loomis would go as far as Samothrace for cults of goddesses who made contributions to the Grail Legend (*Celtic Myth and Arthurian Romance*, pp. 285-295). Dr. Nutt has emphasised the resemblance of Greek and Irish conceptions in the matter of the Other World. Miss Weston would resort to the cult of Adonis to find the origins of the Grail Legend and would attribute to the Phœnician settlers in ancient Britain, the work of transferring the Adonis cult to that country (*Quest of the Holy Grail*, pp. 77-78 and 116); while Prof. Nitze champions the claims of the

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\* It is to be noted however that if Arthur is to be connected with *Aryaman* he is indirectly connected with *Mitra* or *Mithra*. For *Aryaman* is a solar god very similar to *Mithra*; as Sir A. B. Keith observes, "Aryaman, who is Indo-Iranian in character, and may even be akin to the Irish ancestor *Airem*, has practically no distinctive feature save his friend; by nature which makes him a parallel with *Mitra*" (*Religion and Philosophy of the Vedas*, p. 99).

Eleusinian mysteries and would seek the origins of the Grail Legend in that direction.

We may go here a little further and suggest that in all or most Aryan peoples, there was the idea of some great Virtue—whether individual or racial—or some “ talisman ”, which secured the blessings of spiritual sanctity, royal power and material nutrition. Thus, in the Atharva Veda, the Devas and Asuras engage in struggles for the Cow (the emblem of food), the Earth (emblem of Royalty) and the treasures of the latter. The Devas triumph in this great strife, thanks to the powerful help of Prajapati and Agni (fire) and owing to their possession of the “ Tejas ” or Glory.

This topic can only be referred to here, since more space will be devoted to it later. As to the Greeks they have themselves supplied us with guidance on the matter by identifying the Royal Glory (*Hvarenó*) with Tyche. This idea of Tyche as controlling the fortunes of cities can be traced back to the poet Pindar. Tyche, however, became the guardian of the fortunes of city-states only as late as the fourth century before Christ (cf. *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. III, 689-690), *i.e.* after the decline of Kingship in ancient Greece. But it is quite probable that, before the period of such decline, Tyche represented the fortune or Glory of individual Kings or States. This idea of the Royal Glory is found even beyond the Aryan races ; for in China there was the idea of the “ Regulating Virtue ” of particular dynasties.

which overcame the unruly elements of the State (cf Granet, *Danses et Légendes de la Chine Ancienne*, pp. 117; 237; 249-251).

But the cult of the Royal or Aryan Glory received the greatest development in ancient Iran, in the Mihir Yasht and the Zamyād Yasht. There the Royal Glory (or *Hvarenō*) resides with the Yazata Mithra who may at his will grant it to kings and nations or "turn it away" (Mihir Yasht, s. 27). Thus the notion of the Royal Glory was made the basic idea of all political obligation, and it was in an important sense the origin of that theory of Divine Right of kings, which played such an important part in the history of Europe. That Royal Glory has, as will be shown, most of the characteristics as well of the "talismans" or "treasures" connected with the Holy Grail. The ideas of the Mihir Yasht and of the Zamyād Yasht regarding this Royal Glory were inherited by and embodied in the Shāhnāme. As Prof. F. W. Buckler has shown, "Firdausi is first and last the Poet of the Kayan Glory or Grace—the *farr* or *hvarenō kavaem*" (*Supplement to the Journal of American Oriental Society*, No. 1, September, 1935, p. 18). It is submitted that in view of the undoubted prevalence of Mithraism in Europe for centuries and the popularity of the Mithraic mysteries there, *it is to Mithraism that we must turn, with confidence, to find the source of important contributions to the Grail Legend*. While in the case of the mysteries whether of Adonis, of Eleusis or of Samothrace, a great deal must be

left to imagination in order to connect them with ancient Britain, in the case of Mithraism the connection is obvious and undoubted, and the influence almost certain. Indeed, it would be strange if Mithraism which flourished so long in Britain left no traces at all on such popular and ancient legends as those of the Holy Grail and of Arthur.

Two eminent scholars—Gaster and Wesselofsky—have also claimed an Eastern origin for the Grail Legend. But they have contented themselves with tracing that source to the Alexander romance—a much later affair than the Saga of Kai Khusrau or than Mithraism—which are here assumed to be the source. Moreover these latter sources will be found to supply many more motifs of the Grail Cult than the Alexander romance can, *e.g.* the “Grail Castle” or the “Fisher-King,” as will be shown later. And in the second place, the Grail Cult contains undoubtedly some form of Initiation or Mystery which can be supplied by Mithraism in the best and highest sense, while that essential element is entirely absent in the Alexander Saga which lacks, further, the necessary religious background. Finally, it might be added that the Alexander saga was itself indebted to the legend of Kai Khusrau and to the Iranian traditions of the Royal Glory for various elements. The importance and wide influence of this Iranian tradition is only beginning to be fully recognised. For, as Prof. F. W. Buckler has observed, in the article from which we have quoted already, “in the Alexander biographies of the West—the Sikan-

darnamah—in the lives of Cyrus (the Great and the Younger)—the works of Dio Cassius, the historian, and the Augustan histories, but particularly in the Gospels, we have a western branch of the tradition whose eastern branch is represented by Firdausi's Shāhnāmeḥ."

In any case the days are gone when it could be said:—

*"Ne sont que trois matières a nul homme entendant."*

*De France et de Bretagne et de Rome la Grant."*

We have to look farther and beyond these—in fact to the whole Aryan tradition. The great epics of the world might indeed be classified according to their main *motifs*. Thus the Arthurian legend and the Shāhnāmeḥ have for their main topic the quest of the Royal Glory or the Grail. The motif of the Rāmāyana and the Iliad is "the abduction of the queen"; while "the fight between relations to a finish" forms that of the Mahābhārata and of the Niebelungenlied.

We may in any case venture to make the suggestion that a study of the Zamyād Yasht and Mihir Yasht as well as that of the Shāhnāmeḥ, and even of the epics or romances written in imitation of the Shāhnāmeḥ, will throw considerable light on the problem of the Grail Quest. We know that some of the beautiful romances on which the Shāhnāmeḥ is based were carried as far as Arabia in the seventh century. We know also how far the Pahlavi stories contained in what we know as the "Arabian Nights" have spread.

Here an attempt will be made to connect the legend of the Grail with the traditions embodied in the Iranian epic, on the one hand, and with the still earlier traditions contained in the Zamyād Yasht and in Mithraism on the other.

### SCHEME OF THE ESSAY

We shall compare the Holy Grail and the Royal Glory in the following aspects :—

- (1) The nature of the Grail and the Glory ;
- (2) the varied forms assumed by each of them ;
- (3) the character of the quest for each of them ;
- (4) the problem of the " Fisher King " and the lines on which it can be solved ;
- (5) the heroes of the Quest and their exploits in the Grail Castle and elsewhere.

We shall then deal with the points of contact between Mithraism and the Grail Legend, and with the parallelism between the ideals of the former and those of the Round Table. Finally, we shall briefly examine the Folk-lore theory and the attempt to find the origins of the Grail Legend in the mysteries of Adonis, of Eleusis and of Samothrace.

### (1) THE NATURE OF THE HOLY GRAIL

We may ask, in the first place, what was that mysterious " Talisman " called the Holy Grail and to what does it correspond in the Old Iranian legends? We know that the Grail varies from " a mysterious and undescribed Food-providing Object which comes and goes without visible agency " to " a Stone

endowed with food and life-giving properties, which also from time to time assumes the role of an *oracle* " (J. L. Weston, '*Quest of the Holy Grail*,' pp. 1-2). This rich, mysterious and automatic food-providing object, which goes and comes at will, is sometimes seen (by Gawain) as a *Cup* and also takes the shape of a *Lance*. The Grail is described as serving the guests and the Fisher King with all sorts of food (Rhys, *Arthurian Legend*, p. 314) and it has also spiritual properties. It was further "an infallible cure for all ailments and diseases, whatever their nature might be " (*ib.* p. 170).

Now the nature of the *Hvarenó* (*Khureh* or *Farr* or Glory) will be found to agree very closely with that of the Holy Grail. On this subject the best source of information—the *locus classicus* in fact—is the *Zamyād Yasht*, sections 53-54 and 67-69. As the latter sections say, that Glory is a mysterious quality "bringing good pastures and fine horses; *bringing plenty* with beauty and weal; powerful and friendly, *rich of pastures, prolific and golden*..... And there comes with it a horse's strength, there comes with it a camel's strength, there comes with it a man's strength, there comes with it the Kingly Glory; and there is in him, so much of Kingly Glory, *as might extinguish all the non-Aryan nations*. And then (through it) living creatures (*may keep away*) *hunger and death*".

Here we may pause and see that the Glory (like the Holy Grail) is certainly a *food-providing object*

in the first instance—and something better—inasmuch as it provides welfare and strength also. As section 52 of that Yasht adds, “ Riches will cleave unto him (the possessor of the Glory), giving him full welfare, holding a shield before him, powerful, and rich of cattle and garments.” This is like the Holy Grail which also supplies food, and food of a specially rich and varied character (Weston, *op. cit.* p. 83). Moreover in the same Yasht (section 58) the Turanian King who desires to conquer and seize the Glory desires thereby to “ defile all corn and liquors ” of his hated neighbour Iran. But we note that the Glory, like the Grail is something more than a food-providing talisman and “ surrounded with an atmosphere of mysterious sanctity befitting the holiest of relics ” (Weston, p. 76). For, as section 53 of the Yasht adds, whosoever possesses the Glory “ has the gifts of an Athravan (*i.e.* of a holy priest)” and to him is granted “ illumination and fulness of knowledge.” That it fulfils the functions of an oracle and also that it assumes varied forms, which are indeed more numerous even than those of the Holy Grail, will be shown a little later. However, we may emphasise here that, like the Grail, the Glory had “ life-giving properties”. For when the Turanian King tries to seize the Glory and thus destroy Iran, he is warned that “ Ahura Mazda will come against thee, ever eager to create new creatures ” (Zamyād Yasht, section 58). It is obvious that the Turanian King was attempting to destroy Aryan prosperity and life

by conquering or forcibly seizing the Glory.

In the Zamyād Yasht the *Hvarenō* (or *farr*) is distinctly an "*object which goes and comes at will without visible agency*" like the Grail. For when the Turanian King Frangrasyān (Afrāsiyāb) "tried to seize it, the Glory escaped, the Glory fled away, the Glory changed its seat" (section 56). That idea is repeated in the same Yasht, section 82; for when "round about the seven Karshvares (continents) did that ruffian Frangrasyān rush, trying to seize the Glory", it "escaped to hidden inlets of the sea."

The *Hvarenō* (or Glory) goes and comes at will in another sense too, for it "cleaves" to the virtuous hero especially when he is performing some great exploit. In this way it passed from and to a great number of kings and heroes (cf. Zamyād Yasht, sections 92-95). Indeed the idea of the Royal Glory is not unconnected with that of the *Divine King*, who awaits a worthy successor during the whole of his particular reign. It is curious that hitherto the connection between the ideas of the Divine King and that of the quest of the Holy Grail has not been sufficiently emphasised. We shall enter into some details on the subject when we come to the pages on the subject of the Quest of the Grail. Here we shall only add that the Turanian King Afrāsiyāb was once the possessor of the Royal Glory; but when he lost it, he was slain by a later possessor of that Glory—King Kai Khusrau (Zamyād Yasht, sec. 93). In his *Celtic Myth and Arthurian Romance* (pp. 78-83), Mr. R. S.

Loomis has justly pointed out the importance of the famous study of the Priest of Nemi (by Sir J. Frazer) in the discussion of the Arthurian legends. In making this suggestion, he is following in the steps of Miss Weston and Dr. Nutt. It is to be added that only in the Zamyād Yasht is the idea of the Divine King followed out to its full logical completion—the Royal Glory transferring itself from one Guardian to another upto the very last days of the world when it helps in the task of the Resurrection.

THE HOLY GRAIL, THE "GLORY" AND THE  
ELEMENT OF WATER

Another topic which has not yet been fully explored is the mysterious connection of the Holy Grail with the element of Water. Such aspects of the legends as the "Fisher-King" and the turning of the Grail into a chalice or a cup indicate this connection. So also does the fact that Arthur received his sword from a hand which came out of a lake, and that on the "passing" of Arthur, his sword had to be thrown into the sea whence an arm came out to take possession of it. The connection of the Grail with Water as element is further seen when we find that the sword obtained by Parzival from the Fisher-King breaks asunder at the second blow, but that it can be mended should it be plunged in the *spring Lac* by Karnant before the day dawns (Weston, *Legend of Sir Perceval*, p. 147). King Arthur's Avalon too is a land "over-seas," and, according to Geoffrey of Monmouth, he is taken there

by Merlin and Taliessin together with a steersman, Barinthus, who is supposed to represent the *sea-god* Manawyddan (E. K. Chambers, *Arthur of Britain*, pp. 218-222). He is to be cured there by Murigen—a name of which the etymology is Murigena (or *the sea-born*). We also know that it was the Lady of the Lake who carried off young Lancelot and that “the lake is mere enchantment” (*ib.* 160). This profuse utilisation of the agency of lakes and seas in the Arthur legends deserves to be emphasised.

That connection between the Glory (*Hvarenō*) and the element of Water has been rendered much more explicit in the *Zamyād Yasht*. There the angel of Waters (Apām Napāt, literally “the Son of the Waters”) constitutes himself a real guardian of the Glory in his watery dominion. For, as the *Zamyād Yasht* (sec. 51) has it, “that Glory swells up and goes to the sea Vouru-Kasha. The swift-horsed Son of the Waters (Apām Napāt) seizes it at once; this is the wish of the Son of the Waters, the swift-horsed: ‘I want to seize that Glory that cannot be forcibly seized, down to the bottom of the Sea Vouru-Kasha, in the bottom of the deep rivers’.” The connection of the Glory with the sea is obvious also because when the Turanian King attempted to seize the Glory in the sea, that Glory escaped and “an arm of the Sea Vouru-Kasha was produced” (sec. 56).

This pursuit of the Glory by “the Turanian murderer” and its escape from him happens thrice (*Zamyād Yasht*, §§ 56, 59, 62), and the arms of the

Sea thus produced are termed the lakes *Husravah*, *Vanghazdau* and *Awzdānwa*. Here is something like an identification of the Glory with the element of water. A further item in the connection of the Glory and the watery element is to be found when the *Kyanian* dynasty was founded on the shores of the Lake *Kāsava* in *Seistan*; and the *Yasht* goes on to say (sec. 66) that the Glory "cleaves unto him who grows up there where lies Lake *Kāsava*, along with the *Haetumant* river; there where stands Mount *Ushidhau* surrounded by waters that run from the mountain." It would certainly appear as if the Glory loves the vicinity of waters whether of the sea, the river or the lake.

*Firdausi* goes further than the *Yashts* and asserts that it was in the power of one who possessed the Glory *to command the waters*. As a result, it formed a test or criterion of the possession of the Glory, that he who had it could cross rivers without having to resort to ships and boats. Thus when the heroes *Giw* and *Kai Khusrau* were proceeding towards *Iran* and found the swollen river *Oxus* in their way, while no boats were available, the former thus addressed his companion: "Why are you afraid of the water of the river if indeed you possess the Glory?"

چه اندیشی ارشاه ایران توئی      پناه دلیران و شیران توئی  
بید آب را کی بود بر تو راه      که با فر و برزی و زیبای گاه

Upon this *Kai Khusrau* and his entourage urged their horses into the raging flood and got across in

spite of the weight of the panoply and armour of men and steeds.

As Sir Gawain found out, the Holy Grail was "not of wood, nor of any manner of metal, nor was it in anywise of stone, nor of horn, nor of bone." And yet it could assume on occasions the material shapes of a vase, a cup or a dish, a lance or even a stone. So also the Glory (*Hvarenō*) was so spiritual in character that gods and demons strove for it, and yet it assumed the shape of a cup (*Jām* in *Shāhnāme*) or of a magic stone (*Muhra* in the *Shāhnāme*). It assumed the shape of a bird (in the *Zamyād Yasht*) when it left King Yima. And it assumed the shape of an arm or an inlet of the sea to avoid the Turanian King Frangrasyān (or Afrāsiyāb) who would seize the Glory forcibly (cf. *Zamyād Yasht*, sections 56, 59, 62).

## (2) THE DIFFERENT FORMS OR MANIFESTATIONS OF THE GRAIL

### (a) *The Stone*

One form or instrumentality of the Royal Glory (the Grail) in the Iranian epic was that of an "amulet" or "stone" possessed of magical properties (سحر) which Kai Khusrau possessed. That wonderful talisman was inherited by him from remote and royal ancestors including King Jamshid who had also been the guardians of the Royal Glory. According to Firdausi, the amulet had once belonged to the Kings of antiquity—Hoshang and Tahmuras and Jamshid. For one thing it had the property of *curina men of*

*diseases and bringing them back to life even from the brink of death.* Kai Khusrau utilized it successfully to cure the warrior Gustehem of his wounds after every one else had given up hopes of his recovery :

زهوشنگ و عظمورث و جشید      یکی مهره بد خستگان را امید  
رسیده بمیراث نزدیک شاه      ببازوش بودی همه سال و ماه  
ابر بازوی گسته‌م بر بیست      بیالید بر حستکیباش دست  
اگر زنده گردد تن مرده مرد      جهاندار گسته‌م را زنده کرد

Another property of the amulet of Royal Glory (Grail) was to impart courage, energy and vigour to leaders of armies. Consequently, when Kai Khusrau led his armies for the final struggle with Afrāsiyāb, he sat in his ivory throne on the elephant carrying the amulet embodying the Royal Glory, as well as the cup which was another form of the same Glory. Moreover, in the manifesto which Kai Khusrau put forward on that occasion, the King particularly mentioned his possession of the amulet which ensured him the victory :

چو بر تخت ییل آن شه نامور      زده مهره در جام و بسته کمر  
بهر نامداری و خود کامه      نوشتند بر پهلوی نامه  
که فیروز کیخسرو از پشت ییل      بزد مهره و گشت کیتی چونیل

In the Arthurian legends, also, the Grail is understood to be "the source of Life". Thus the author of the *Parzival* says of the inhabitants of the Grail Castle definitively that "Sie lebent von einem

stein' (they live by a stone) and none who look upon it can die within seven days of that sight" (J. L. Weston, *Quest of the Holy Grail*, p. 124). Thus that author "represents the Grail not as a Vessel but as the stone of the Alchemical Quest", and that stone is none the less the Grail. This Grail was also "an infallible cure from all ailments and diseases" (Prof. Rhys, *Arthurian Legend*, p. 170). In the *Parzival* of Wolfram, the Grail "is a stone brought to earth by angels, and endowed with mysterious attributes. Thus it prolongs indefinitely the youth of all who serve it; none can die within eight days of having beheld it" (J. L. Weston, *The Legend of Sir Perceval*, p. 154).

This stone or amulet which is mentioned in the Iranian epic as securing or insuring victory can be traced back in the Avesta to the Bahrām Yasht (sections 59-60) where the worshipper of Verethraghna (the Genius of Victory) is mentioned as being in possession of such a stone. He prays to the Yazata of Victory "that I may be as constantly victorious as any one of all the Aryans; that I may smite this army, that I may smite down this army, that I may cut into pieces this army that is coming behind me." This stone possesses obviously magical powers, which are ascribed to some other objects as well, of "striking terror into an army and dispersing it." It may be added that in the Bahrām Yasht, King Kai Khusrau is mentioned with special veneration—a trilogy being formed of Kai Khusrau, Kavi Usa (Kai Kaus) and

Thraetaona (Feridun) who are singled out from amongst Iranian Kings and to whom the possession of articles possessing the magical power of securing victory is ascribed (Bahrām Yasht, sections 35-40).

(b) *The Cup*

Another form or instrumentality of the Royal Glory was that of a cup or chalice or vessel. Difficulties might be raised as to how two such different objects as the stone or amulet and the cup would embody the Royal Glory. But the same difficulty is met with in the Arthurian cycle when "two objects, so apparently different from each other as the chalice of the Eucharist and a precious stone represent precisely the same idea and are both of them the Grail" (J. L. Weston, *Quest of the Holy Grail*, p. 126). In the Iranian legend the cup is the جام کیتی نهای in which the whole world can be envisaged at the time of the Vernal Equinox. But of course the person, who is to contemplate in it the world, must be one who, like Kai Khusrau, is the guardian of the Royal Glory (the Grail). Indeed to such a one the magic cup will show not only the affairs of this world but those of the planets and the stars and their constellations as well :

زماهی بجام اندرون تابره      نکاریده پیکر بدی یکسره  
چه کیوان چه هرمز چه بهرام و تیر      چه ماه و چه مهر و چه ناهید و ویر  
همه بودنیها بدو اندرا      بدیدی جهاندار افسونگرا

Thus Kai Khusrau could visualise through it not

only the "seven continents" but also planets like Saturn, Venus and Mars, as well as constellations like Aries and Leo. Through its instrumentality the King discovered the place of the captivity of Bezan in the land of Gurgsār in far off Turān.

We note further that the cup was utilised by King Kai Khusrau at the time of detecting the treachery of Gurgin who had betrayed the hero Bezan. That reminds us that the Holy Grail is represented also as *the cup which tested virtue in general and veracity in particular* (Loomis, *Celtic Myth and Arthurian Romance*, p. 234). Thus in the *Diu Krone* as well as in the *Adventures of Cormac* we are told that the sea-god possessed a cup which tested virtues, and the same deity bestowed the cup on an earthly king. Later still, that testing cup was equated with the Grail. Mr. Loomis is of the opinion that both the Grail and the cup which tested chastity were at one time "imagined as drinking horns" like the cup of Kai Khusrau.

Moreover we shall see that the cup of the Grail also finds parallels in the "craters" or vases found on the sculptures of *Mithra Tauroctone* into which the blood of the bull that is sacrificed flows for the benefit of the whole world.

### (c) *The Lance*

With the Holy Grail is closely associated the Lance; and both in the legend of Perceval and in that of Gawain, the Lance is given a prominent place.

In fact, each hero is started on his knightly career with the present of this lance of *fer blanc*. A Christian interpretation was given in later ages to this Lance, which was then identified with one of the instruments used at the passion of Christ. In other accounts the hero, whether Balaan, Galaad (Galahad) or Arthur, is "given a sword at the outset of his career" (Loomis, *op. cit.* p. 245). The magic sword and spear always form part of the paraphernalia of the Grail Legend; and it is curious to note that "the Irish prototype of Pelleas's spear was 'the venomed spear of Pezar, King of Persia. Its name is Slaughterer. In time of peace its blazing, fiery head is always kept in a great caldron of water to prevent it from burning down the King's palace; and in time of war the champion who bears it to the battlefield can perform any deed he pleases with it'" (Loomis, *op. cit.* p. 254).

Now at the beginning of the legend of King Kai Khusrau, too, the wonder-working Lance plays a great part, and that just when he is trying to demonstrate that he is the possessor of the Royal Glory and, consequently, the heir to the Guardian of the Glory or Grail. In order to prove his title to the throne and his possession of the Glory he is sent to storm the bespelled castle of the magician Bahman. He orders his trusted officer Giw to take the magic lance and to push or thrust it into the wall of the fort:

بفرمود تا گيو يا نيزه تفت      بنزد يك آن بر شده باره رفت  
چونامه بديوار دژ در نهاد      بپام جهاندار خسرو بداد

هم انگه بفرمان یزدان پاک      از ان باره دژ بر امد تراک  
یکی شهر دید اندران دژ فراخ      پر از باغ و میدان و ایوان و کاخ

The spell was immediately broken, the demons holding the castle were dispersed and a new, beautiful, and well-lighted castle appeared in its place.

### (3) THE QUEST OF THE GRAIL

In the legends of the Holy Grail a halo of sanctity always surrounds it, even though sometimes it merely "leaves rich food and drink in its train". But the idea of the sanctity and mysteriousness of the Glory is much more emphasised by the Zamyād Yasht which represents the Glory as important and sacred enough to be the object of a direct conflict between God and Satan—"for which the Good Spirit and the Evil one did struggle with one another: for that Glory that cannot be forcibly seized they flung each of them their darts most swift" (sec. 46). Long before Kings and Knights entered upon the Quest for the Glory or Grail on earth, the gods are represented as entering on a combat of Miltonic character and magnitude for it. Among these deities stands preeminent the figure of Mithra.

In the Zamyād Yasht the Glory is first found on earth in Yima the King who was also the Primal Man, but passes from him (in the form of a bird) when "he began to find delight in words of falsehood and untruth" (sec. 34). In view of what we are going to say later about the importance of the prevalence of Mithra-

ism in Europe as one of the great sources of the Grail saga, it is well to remember that as "the Glory departed from the bright Yima" it was seized by Mithra (*ib.* sec. 35). Then again, in the same Yasht, it is the angel of Fire who contends with demon Azi Dahaka for the Glory. In the Grail Cult, too, the *importance of the element of fire* is considerable. Thus in the *Continuation of Perceval* by Gaucher de Dourdan, that knight is guided to the Grail by finding a tree on which numerous candles were burning and at the approach of the night these candles and trees were changed into a chapel. The Grail is also represented as a light before which earthly lights are extinguished. In this connection, attention might be drawn to the torches held before the *Mithra Tauractone* by the Cautes and the Cautopates whom Dr. Forrer regards as but incarnations of Mithra (*Das Mithra Heiligtum von Königshofen*, p. 124). It is of interest also to note that various knights of the Round Table of Arthur—like Galaad and Boors—are clad in *red* arms since the colour of fire was specially appropriate to solar heroes (Loomis, *op. cit.* pp. 216, 217).

After the gods and demons, the quest of the Royal Glory was taken up by Iranian Kings and their Turanian opposite numbers. The Turanian King Afrāsiyāb was the guardian of the Glory once (Zamyād Yasht, 93); but he forfeited that position by his misdeeds and crimes, and sought in vain thereafter for that Glory in the waters of the ocean Vouru-Kasha. While he was

engaged in this fruitless quest, various Iranian kings of the Kayanian dynasty became the guardians of the Glory in succession. Finally, and in the last days, the Royal Glory will pass on to the group of saints and heroes to whose hands will be entrusted the great task of the Resurrection or Renovation.

#### (4) THE "FISHER-KING"

We now come to consider *a most notable and difficult topic in the Grail legends*—the "Fisher-King" who is extremely aged but is lingering on, awaiting the arrival of his grandson who is to become the guardian of the Grail in the place of the grandfather (cf. Weston, *Quest of the Holy Grail*, p. 16). Meanwhile the land of the old King is lying waste and he himself is maimed or is under some serious physical disability, though even then at his court the Grail manifests itself on occasions. In one version (Mannessier's) the hero has to avenge the death of a relation of the Fisher-King before the latter can be healed. By some narrators the age of the Grail-keeper Brons "is prolonged beyond all natural limits" and is made "upwards of five hundred years". In any case the Grail is very important as supplying provisions to the court of the Fisher-King (Rhys, *op. cit.* p. 314).

Now in the Shāhnāmeḥ we have *two* kings each of whom possesses in a great measure the requisite qualities of the Fisher-King as depicted in the Grail legends. Thus both King Kai Kaus of Irān and King Afrāsiyāb (Frangrasyān in the Yasht) of Turan are grandfathers of the hero—Kai Khusrau the Iranian

King—one of them being the *paternal* grandfather, while the other is the grandfather on the *maternal* side. Both are well advanced in age; for the Iranian epic allots 150 years as the length of the reign of King Kaus. The other hero is far older, having reigned over 350 years by the time of the advent of his *grandson*. These facts about the surprising longevity of the keepers of the Royal Glory agree with the account of Robert de Borron that the age of the Grail-keeper Brons was over five hundred years. But here the resemblance between the two old kings ends and we may take up a study of their remaining characteristics separately.

Let us take up first the consideration of the claims of King Afrāsiyāb (Frangrasyān) to the title of the "Fisher-King"—for the epithet "Fisher-King" is best explained in that connection. Indeed here we have a very convincing and needful theory regarding the origin of that epithet; for as Miss Weston remarks in her *Quest of the Holy Grail*, by the time the Perceval Grail poem was written "the real meaning of that title ("the Fisher-King") had been forgotten" and "it was necessary to explain *tant bien que mal* the title of the 'Fisher-King'" (*ib.* p. 47). Similarly, Dr. Nutt "thinks it simpler to believe that in the original Celtic tradition the surname of Rich Fisher *had a significance now lost*". But it is just here that we can utilise the legends preserved in the Zamyād and Ābān Yashts to solve the mystery. Now in the Zamyād Yasht (sec. 51), the Glory that

Afrāsiyāb (Frangrasyān) wants to seize is said to be "down in the bottom of the sea Voura-Kasha, in the bottom of the deep rivers". Again, in sections 56, 59 and 62 the same monarch "strips himself naked wishing to seize that Glory". It is obvious that *Afrāsiyāb is fishing for that Glory* and keeps diving into the sea to seize it forcibly. But on each occasion that he does so "the Glory escaped, the Glory fled away, the Glory changed its seat and an arm was produced in the sea Vouru-Kasha". Afrāsiyāb has thus earned some right to be called the "Fisher-King"; and this effort of his to seize the Glory which was located in the waters was a well-known affair. For in the Ābān Yasht (section 42) the same monarch prays to the goddess of waters that "I may seize hold of that Glory, that is waving in the middle of the sea Vouru-Kasha and that belongs to the Aryan people." If we identify this Turanian King with the Fisher-King, then the Grail Castle would be the cave or "palace built underground with walls of iron and a hundred columns: its height was a thousand times a man's size" spoken of in the Avesta. Such was the far-famed palace or Hankané (in Persian *Hang*) of Afrāsiyāb well fitted to represent the dwelling of King Brons, the Keeper of the Holy Grail. Like Brons, Afrāsiyāb "the lord of the Grail Castle is always found engaged in fishing" for the Royal Glory or Grail—seeking it in the sea Vouru-Kasha where it is hidden. We note further that, in the Galaad version, the mother of the hero of the Quest is the daughter

of the Grail King. This too is on all fours with the account in the *Shāhnāme* where the mother of King Kai Khusrau—her name was Firangis—was the daughter of King Afrāsiyāb. Finally, Afrāsiyāb is indeed to be taken as the counterpart of the Fisher-King of the Grail Legend if we accept a suggestion of Prof. Rhys. In his view, “it is highly probable that the story of Peredur (Perceval) in its original form represented the *Fisher-King and his brother as hostile to Peredur*” (*The Arthurian Legend*, p. 117). Moreover, we are told that the Rich Fisher was a *consummate wizard*—“much he knew of black art”—and he had made his court all but impossible to find. Certainly in the Iranian epic both Afrāsiyāb and his brother Karsiwaz were both mortal foes of the hero Kai Khusrau, and the former was a magician who vaunted his art and whose cave could be found only after a very long search.

The other—and even a better—candidate in the *Shāhnāme* for the position of “the Fisher-King” is Kai Kaus, the paternal grandfather of King Kai Khusrau. He too has a great many characteristics in common with the Fisher-King. It can truly be said that “he is languishing in extreme old age awaiting the arrival of his grandson who is to become the Guardian of the Grail in his stead”. The *Shāhnāme* represents Kai Kaus as a very old monarch who is prepared to part with his sovereignty to the grandson (Kai Khusrau) on the latter’s arrival; and in the event he actually did so. The Glory is to go to the *grandson*

because the son (Siyāwash) has been slain by the Turanian King. The land of Iran is *waste*, because the Turanian King has been invading and ravaging it; and to this are added the horrors of a long famine of seven years :

همه سوخت آباد بوم و درخت      بر ایرانیان بر شد این کار سخت  
ز باران هوا خشک شدهفت سال      دگرکوه شد رنگ و برگشت حال

The whole land was suffering from such ravages and it was saved only by the arrival of the new Guardian of the Grail (or "Glory"). On his accession, Kai Khusrau soon makes the country flourishing and slays the Turanian invader. It was a voice from heaven which informed the Iranians that if they wanted these ravages to cease they should go in quest of the future possessor of the Royal Glory :

بران ابر باران نشسته سروش      بگو درزگفتی که بکشای کوش  
بتوران یکی شهریاری نواست      بجا نام او شاه کی خسرو است  
به ایران چو آید بی فرخش      ز چرخ آنچه پرسد رسد پاسخش

It might be noted that there is no inconsistency in calling both Kaus and Afrāsiyāb Grail-keepers since both had once possessed the *Hvarenō* and both had lost it.

#### THE FAMILY OF THE KEEPERS OF THE GRAIL

Our suggestion that King Kaus (both in the *Shāhnāme* and in *Zamyād Yasht*) corresponds to the "Fisher-King" throws light on *another Grail problem which has so far defied the ingenuity of all*

*commentators.* It has been remarked as very curious that "the Keepers are of one family"; and in the Pseudo-Gautier "Joseph prays that the Grail may remain with his descendents" (Nutt, *Studies in the Legend of the Holy Grail*, pp. 80-83; A. E. Waite, *The Holy Grail, Its Legends and Symbolism*, pp. 576-577). In order to solve this mystery, it has been imagined that the Grail-Keepers signify successive mystic adepts each of whom possesses the mystery in his turn. But a much better interpretation is found if the hypothesis here suggested meets with acceptance. For the Zamyād Yasht describes how the Royal Glory "cleaves" to eight Kings of *one family* in succession beginning with Kavi Kavāta and ending with Kavi Husravah (Kai Khusrau); and the Shāhnāmeh follows the Yasht. Afrāsiyāb too was a cousin of these Kings. Hence the difficulty regarding the Keepers of the Grail all belonging to one family disappears entirely, and there is no need of transforming Brons or Pelles into mystic adepts. So also all complications arising from the various versions regarding the relationship between the Grail-keeper and the achiever of the Quest (noted by Dr. Nutt, *op. cit.* pp. 83) also disappear, since Kai Khusrau was the grandson of Kai Kaus. There need be no trouble regarding the "shifts to which the later harmonisers were put in their attempt to reconcile divergent accounts". Above all, features like the "sorrow in the House of the Grail" can be explained better on the present hypothesis than on any other—the

sorrow being due to the murder of Siyāwash son of Kaus (the possessor of the Royal Glory and, hence, the "Grail-Keeper") and the son-in-law of Afrāsiyāb.

#### THE HEROES OF THE QUEST IN THE SHĀHNĀMEH

Of all Iranian Kings and heroes, it was Kai Khusrau, who was preeminently the possessor of the Glory. It "clave unto him for the righteousness of the law, for the innocence of the law, for the unconquerable power of the law, for the extermination of the enemies at one stroke" (Zamyād Yasht, sec. 74). A later section (76) adds that the Glory gave him "a dominion full of splendour, a long, long life and all boons and remedies". Here we find the important truth emphasised at once by the Iranian epic and by the European poets of the Middle Ages that it is only a Knight *sans peur et sans reproche* who can achieve the Quest of the Grail or the Glory. The "talisman" which brought to its possessor health and prosperity, power and empire, was indeed the reward of the highest royal and knightly virtue.

#### (5) "THE GREAT FOOL TALE"

The stories about the infancy and boyhood of Kai Khusrau are remarkably similar to those about Perceval *enfances*. In the legend of Perceval (as traced by Chretien de Troyes, Wolfram and others) the hero lives almost alone in the forest with his mother, subsisting mainly on the milk of goats; and yet his mother is closely related to the Grail King—being, by some accounts, his daughter (J. L. Weston, *The*

*Legend of Sir Perceval*, pp. 64-90) and, according to others, his sister. The father of Perceval has been slain—and according to some versions—treacherously, while the widow has to fly to a wood for safety. According to Chretien de Troyes the flight of the mother is due to her apprehension for the safety of her child's life. This flight has been rendered possible by the intervention of an old and unnamed person; and it is also mentioned that the widow has lost not only her husband but her lands. The child-hero shows his inclination for arms by using some "gavelots" (darts) to slay the deer. He also fashions for his own use bows and arrows with which he slays birds and stags. When Perceval is taken to the King's Court "he treats the King discourteously, does not know his own name and shows an enormous appetite." Miss Weston concludes her study of this aspect of the legend of Sir Perceval by observing that there was an original and common source of the versions of Chretien and Wolfram von Eschenbach and others which was "an extremely full and detailed form of the story".

Now it is a remarkable fact that almost all the details of the legends of Perceval's infancy are to be found in the story of the infancy of King Kai Khusrau as told by Firdausi:—

1. His father (prince Siyāwash) had been slain treacherously like the father of Perceval. The treachery was that of Karsiwaz, the brother of King Afrāsiyāb since the former, by his machinations, instigated the latter

to have the Iranian prince executed. The Italian poem of Carduino—which is an imitation of the Perceval legends—comes nearest to the Shāhnāmeḥ in asserting that the father of the hero had been killed treacherously by “Mordarette” and his brother (*ib.* p. 84). Similarly it is Afrāsiyāb and his brother Karsiwaz who slay the father of Kai Khusrau treacherously.

2. The mother of Kai Khusrau was a princess (like that of Perceval) being the daughter of King Afrāsiyāb himself.
3. In the Perceval legend, the safety of the child is due to an old man's intervention who made the flight of the mother and the child possible. But the identity of this old man is kept vague and enigmatic. In the Shāhnāmeḥ, however, this old person is no less than Pirān Wīseh—the Vizier of King Afrāsiyāb—who dissuades the King from carrying out his idea of putting to death the mother who was *enceinte* at the time of the death of her husband. Pirān sends the boy to the shepherds of the fort Kalu to be brought up.
4. In the forest young Kai Khusrau, when he attains the seventh year, shapes a crude kind of bow and arrows for himself and starts hunting, exactly as in the Perceval

legend :

چو شد هفت ساله کو سرفراز      هنر با نژادش همی گفت راز  
ز چوبی کمان کرد وز رود زه      ز هر سو بر افکند بر زه گره  
ابا پر و پیکان یکی تیر کرد      بدشت اندر اهنک نخچیر کرد

5. While in the Perceval legends the uncouth conduct of the hero at the court is ascribed to his rustic education in the forest, the Iranian epic attributes it to a deep-laid design. The Vizier—Pirān, who watched over the security of the young prince sedulously—advised him to assume the role of an idiot boy with the object of disarming the suspicions of King Afrāsiyāb. That King had been warned long ago by astrologers that his ruin would be brought about by his grandson. The mind of the conscience-stricken king was therefore always full of dark suspicions and fears. In order to disarm these suspicions, Pirān advised the young Kai Khusrau to save his life by pretending idiocy. Hence, when the boy was brought before King Afrāsiyāb, he answered all the questions put to him in the most absurd and irrelevant manner. The dialogue with its questions and irrelevant answers has almost a comic character :

*Question :—*How do you manage and keep an account of your cattle ?

*Answer* :—There is no game to be taken here,  
nor have I bow, arrow or armour.

*Question* :—Do you desire to proceed to the  
land of Irān and to join its King ?

*Answer* :—The day before a knight passed  
me traversing hill and forest.

*Question* :—Do you know the names of your  
father and mother ? What do you know  
about the land of Irān ?

*Answer* :—If there is a strong lion he can tear  
out the heart of the strongest man.

The result of this dialogue reassured Afrāsiyāb, who became secure in the thought that he had to deal only with an idiot boy, who could never threaten a king's life and kingdom ; and by this stratagem the life of Kai Khusrau was saved.

#### KAI KHUSRAU AND " THE ABYAN EXPULSION AND RETURN FORMULA "

It is when we recognise that the stories of the infancy of Perceval were formed on the pattern of those of Kai Khusrau that various difficulties relating to the *Perceval Enfances* are removed. For one thing, the extreme ignorance which Perceval shows at the King's court can hardly command our belief, regarding a knight who is soon to rise to such eminence. But the case is quite different, if it is a case of concealed knowledge and simulated ignorance (as the *Shāhnāme* emphasises). Then, again, the theory of

matriarchy has been advanced to account for Perceval's claims to his later dignities (Weston, *Legend of Sir Perceval*, p. 100). But this hypothesis is a needless one as regards the account as given by the Iranian epic, since there the hero is the grandson of two kings—on the paternal as well as maternal side. Our suggestion also agrees with the hypothesis regarding the "Aryan Expulsion and Return formula". Perseus, Cyrus and Romulus have had the formula attached to them; but the importance of the story of Kai Khusrau as an exemplification and an origin of the idea has not been so far emphasised. It is submitted here that while Cyrus was forgotten for ages in Persia, and while there is no mention of him in the Iranian epic or histories, the adventures of Kai Khusrau and the misfortunes of his father (Siyāwash) have formed favourite subjects of Iranian minstrelsy from times immemorial. Thus the famous Sassanide minstrel Bārbad distinguished himself by his poem on "the Revenge for Siyāwash" (کین سیاوش). In fact the "Expulsion and Return formula" suits Kai Khusrau particularly well, and we may safely regard the very old traditions regarding him as the basis and origin of that formula.

#### (b) "THE VENGEANCE QUEST"

It can be claimed without fear of contradiction, that the most famous quest for vengeance in epic literature is that of King Kai Khusrau. His whole life was in fact a quest of vengeance for his father. That quest achieved, he was ready to depart from this

world. Moreover, he is not merely avenging his father Siyāwash but also Agriras and Nodar and other earlier victims of the cruelty of Afrāsiyāb. Even the religious literature of Iran echoes this tale of the great vendetta ; and Yasht after Yasht rings with the earnest prayer of Kai Khusrau for vengeance on Afrāsiyāb. The former traverses, in fact, the whole world to accomplish this one great task of his life. Even in the East—the land of vendettas—this particular Vengeance-quest is the unique one. For, as the Iranian epic narrates in a remarkable scene—with Rustam, Zāl and other leading warriors as witnesses—Kai Khusrau was made to swear eternal hostility to Afrāsiyāb. That scene reminds us of the oath administered to Hannibal by his father to bear eternal enmity to Rome. Kai Khusrau is made to swear by his crown and his signet, by the Sun and the Moon, by Day and Night, by his sword and his armour, by the spirit of his murdered father and that of the great King Feridun, as well as by his own life and soul, to bring about the death of Afrāsiyāb and never to conclude peace with him. It is indeed a grand and highly poetic inauguration of the Vengeance quest :

بگوئی بداد و بخورشید و ماه	به تیغ و بمهر و به تخت و کلاه
بشمشیر گردان و باداد و برد	بروز سپید و شب لاجورد
بداد فریدون و آئین و راه	بخون سیاوش بجان تو شاه
بجان و خرد باسمان و زمین	به تیغ و بکرزو بمهر و نکین

که هرگز نه پیچم سوی مهرآوی      نه بینم بخواب اندرون چهرآوی  
 بکوشم بخون یدر خواستن      دل و جان بدین کینه اراستن  
 گواکرد دستان ورستم بران      بزرگان لشکر همه همچنان

Nor is this all. Where, out of the pages of Firdausi, shall we find such exquisite versions—not to say theory—of, and apology for the Vengeance quest—the Vendetta? Thus in one eloquent passage Firdausi describes a great vendetta as a mighty tree ever fresh and green, and the partakers in the vendetta as so many leaves of that tree—one leaf cropping up as its predecessor drops out. The death of the father is no great matter indeed so long as he leaves a son to carry on the vendetta:

چنین گفت کاین کینه باشانخ وبرد      زمانه نپوشد بزنگار و کرد  
 بسان درختیست با تازه برگ      دل ازخون شاهان نیچد زمرگ  
 پدر بگذرد کین بماند بجای      پسر باشد اندرو را رهنمای

In another place the poet adds that if a grandson does not seek to avenge his ancestor, that only proves that he is no better than a bastard:

نبیره که کین نیا رانجست      رواگر نژادش نباشد درست

No doubt, other old epics have descriptions of and apologies for the vendetta. Thus "the furious Acmās" observes (in the fourteenth book of the *Iliad*) that:

"Not unappeased he enters Pluto's gate  
 "Who leaves a brother to avenge his fate."

And Achilles thus addresses the ghost of Patroclus :

“All hail Patroclus ! let thy honoured ghost,  
 “Hear and rejoice on Pluto’s dreary coast ;  
 “Behold Achilles’ promise is complete ;  
 “The bloody Hector stretched before thy feet”.

But in the Shāhnāmeḥ the “Vengeance quest” constitutes a feature of far greater importance than in any other epic. For the epic portion (as contrasted with the historical portion) of the Shāhnāmeḥ is made up of a series of vendettas ; and in fact the poem moves forward on a series of vendettas. There, we have the first vendetta pursued by Minucheḥr against Tūr for the murder of Irach ; a second one pursued by Afrāsiyāb for the slaying of Tūr ; a third one undertaken and carried out by Kai Khusrau against Afrāsiyāb ; a fourth one waged by Gudarz and Bezan against Pirān and his family ; a fifth—an unsuccessful one—carried on by Afrāsiyāb to avenge the deaths of his sons Surkheh and Shideh ; a sixth one—also an unsuccessful one—undertaken by Pirān and Nestihan to avenge Homān. In fact vendettas and “Vengeance quests” might be said to form the very substance—the warp and the woof—of the Iranian epic.

### (c) THE GRAIL CASTLE

In the Legend of Sir Perceval, the hero proceeds from the Fisher-King with a sword, which was destined from the first to be used by him. The Knight approaches the Grail Castle. Next morning the castle has vanished and he finds himself in the

fairest flowery meadow in the world. He rides on and "comes to a castle with walls of red and white marble ; within he hears sounds of singing and music, pipe, harp and organ " (J. L. Weston, *Legend of Sir Perceval*, pp. 133-141). He strikes the gate of the castle with his sword, an old man appears and informs him that "he stands at the gates of a Paradise which cannot be won by force or earthly prowess." But the old man also gives him a letter which "has the virtue of restoring any mad man to his senses". As Perceval returns, all the people of the land bless him, for it is through his question as to the meaning of the Lance that it has again become fertile.

Now it is worth noting that *all the elements and factors* in the above story are to be found in the story of the taking of the fort of Bahman the magician, by King Kai Khusrau. His grandfather, King Kai Kaus (whom we have identified with "the Fisher-King"), desires to ascertain whether his younger son Fariburz or his grandson Kai Khusrau is to be his true successor, and as such the possessor of the Royal Glory or Grail. Both claimants are therefore ordered to proceed to the magical fort, Bahmandezh ; and whichever of the two succeeds in capturing it is to be the successor. Fariburz—the son—gives up the enterprise at once ; and, metaphorically speaking, the *sword has broken in his hand*. Kai Khusrau, however, writes a conjuration, places it on the point of a lance and orders the warrior Giw to *rush with the lance on to the gate of the fort and push it into the gate* :

بشد کیو نیزه گرفته بدست      بنزدیک آن بر شده باره رفت  
هم آنکه بفرمان یزدان پاک      ازان باره دژ بر آمد ترائک

The darkness of the magic fort disappeared and a *beautiful well-lighted castle appeared* instead, in which there were beautiful gardens and palaces :

و زان پس یکی روشنی بر دمید      شد ان تیرگی سر بسر نا پدید  
یکی شهر دید اندران دژ فراخ      بر ازباغ و میدان و ایوان و کاخ

This would certainly appear to correspond to the second castle seen by Sir Perceval. The description given by Prof. Sir John Rhys applies very well indeed to this account of the capture of Fort Bahman by Kai Khusrau. "The visit of the solar hero has annihilated a whole landscape of enchantment in the twinkling of an eye. Balyn, with the thrust of his long lance, has undone a whole world" (*Arthurian Legend*, p. 268). The whole land, too, rejoiced that Kai Khusrau had attained to and secured the Royal Glory (Grail) and such power :

جهانی فرو مانده اندر شکفت      که کیخسرو آن فرو بالا گرفت

The *land recovered from devastation*, since a possessor of Royal Glory was now to be crowned King. For, ere this, there had been the seven years' famine of which we have spoken before. Moreover, according to the Iranian epic, the letter (handed out of the Grail Castle) which was *to cure the mad man* was very necessary ; for Fariburz (the rival of Kai Khusrau) and his chief supporter—Tūs—had behaved themselves like mad men in opposing intemperately the claim of the

hero to the throne :

تو نودر تژادی نه بیگانه پدر تند بود و تو دیوانه

As it was, when Tūs saw what success the spear and the letter of Kai Khusrau had achieved at the Castle of Bahman ("Grail Castle") he came to his senses; he was cured of his pride and hastened to apologize to Kai Khusrau. Thus we have noted how *almost all the elements of the story of Sir Perceval in Grail Castle are to be found in the Shāhnāmeḥ narrative which deals with the exploit of Kai Khusrau at the castle of Bahman.*

#### MANNESSIER'S CONTINUATION OF THE "PERCEVAL"

We have noted above a great many resemblances between the Perceval and Grail legends and those relating to King Kai Khusrau as given by the Shāhnāmeḥ. The parallelism is however even closer when we come to consider Mannessier's Continuation of the *Conte du Graal*. There Perceval has to conquer Partinal the enemy of the Fisher King and has to "avenge the death of the Fisher King's brother Goon" (cf. Rhys, *Arthurian Legend*, p. 120). This approaches very close to the account given in the Shāhnāmeḥ, where Kai Khusrau has to defeat the Turanian King Afrāsiyāb and to avenge (not only the death of Kai Khusrau's own father) but that of Aghri-ras (the brother of Afrāsiyāb). According to the Yashts, Kai Khusrau's "Vengeance quest" or "Feud" has for its object the avenging of these *two* persons. Both in the Shāhnāmeḥ and in Mannessier the "Vengeance

quest" involves world-wars of great magnitude. Again, according to Mannessier, as soon as the Fisher-King hears that the offender Partinal's head is cut off, he jumps up restored to health and strength. There is a remarkably close approach to this account in the Shāhnāmeḥ. There, Kai Kaus (the Fisher-King) had grown both feeble and unwise; but after the Turanian foe has been defeated and driven to his last stronghold, he recovers his wits and gives directions to the hero Kai Khusrau, which lead finally to the capture and destruction of the Turanian King. Nor do the resemblances between Mannessier's Continuation and the Shāhnāmeḥ end here. For, both Kai Khusrau and Perceval are crowned Kings on the death of the old Grail King, and both have peaceful reigns. We note further that, according to this version, Perceval ultimately renounces the crown and becomes a priest, and that after his death no one has ever seen the Grail. Similarly, Kai Khusrau renounced his crown in pursuit of spiritual ambitions and at last ascended to heaven. With him disappears the equipment of the Royal Glory—the Cup and the Stone or amulet. So remarkable are these similarities between Firdausi's account of Kai Khusrau and the career of Perceval as given by Mannessier, that it would have been most interesting to know the source from which the latter drew his inspiration (Baumgartner, *Geschichte der Weltliteratur*, Vol. V, 105-106).

Another hero of the Quest for the Glory—according to the Iranian epic—is the warrior Giw (*Gevān* in

Pahlavi, and *Gaevani* in the Avesta). It is not impossible that his name survives in that of Gawain (or Walwain)—the earliest hero of the Quest of the Holy Grail. On the other hand, the difficulties in the way of deriving the French form of the name from the Welsh Gwalchmei are obvious (Chambers, *Arthur of Britain*, p. 151). It has been recognised that "Gawain is beyond all doubt the original protagonist of the Quest in its primitive, pre-Christian form." Later on, he lost his position to knights who could play the Christian role better; but before that he figured as the earliest of Arthur's knights—one who dominated the scene long before Perceval, Tristan or Lancelot. Now in the Iranian epic the hero Giw has also his "quests" one of them lasting seven years to search out King Kai Khusrau with his Royal Glory. This figure seven for the years of the quest is found also in the Perceval legend where the hero who was in search of the Grail was told that "the broken sword will add *seven and half years* to his quest" (J. L. Weston, *Legend of Sir Perceval*, p. 141). In the legend of Giw's search for Kai Khusrau for seven years, we have also a parallel to the importance of *the question* in the Perceval legend. We find that Giw when seeking for Kai Khusrau's whereabouts in the vast territory of Turan used to put the question to any one whom he met—"Do you know where Kai Khusrau is?" Any one who answered the query in the negative was at once struck down by a single blow of the sword of Giw, lest he should carry news of Giw and of his quest to

the King of Turan :

جدو گفت کی خسرو ایدر کجاست      بیايد سخن بر گشادنت راست  
چنين داد پاسخ که نشنیده ام      خود اين نام هرگز نپرسیده ام  
چو پاسخ چنين گفت آن رهنمون      بزد تیغ و انداختش سر نکون  
چنين تا بر آمد بر اين هفت سال      میان سوده از تیغ و بند و دوال

But apart from this "quest for the Royal Glory" in the person of Kai Khusrau, Giw had his own "Vengeance quest" as well. For in the war with Turan more than seventy of his brothers had been killed ; and it was on Giw and his son Bezan that the task of carrying out the vendetta for them fell. That vendetta was considered as accomplished only after Homān and Pirān, and their brothers Nestihan and Lahāk and Farshidward were slain. Thus in respect of both these quests, Giw was very much in the same situation as King Kai Khusrau himself.

On the other hand, the warriors Fariburz and Tūs might be termed the unsuccessful knights of the Iranian quest. They set out for the castle of Bahman (corresponding to the Grail Castle) to prove the claim of the former to the Royal Glory (or Grail). But they failed there signally. Later still, they set out on the "Vengeance conquest" as ordered by King Kai Khusrau in order to avenge on Afrāsiyāb the death of Siyāwash. Here again they fail equally signally, since they never reached the capital of Afrāsiyāb, and foolishly diverted their energies to attack the fort of prince Farud—the half brother of

Kai Khusrau. In the end they are attacked and pursued by the Turanian commander. And thus their quests both of the Glory (Grail) and of Vengeance concluded most ingloriously. Hence there are instances—and important ones too—of Knights of high royal descent returning unsuccessfully and in disgrace on account of their arrogance, incompetence and recklessness. As in the quest of the Holy Grail so in the Quest of the Royal Glory, success is the reward of humility, courage and knightly behaviour.

#### A CONSIDERATION OF OTHER THEORIES OF GRAIL ORIGINS

##### (a) THE RITUAL THEORY

Let us now see how our theory of the Iranian origins of the Holy Grail compares with various other theories on the subject, which hold the field at present. There is, for example, the Ritual theory of Miss J. L. Weston to the effect that it was the basic idea of the Holy Grail cult which was essentially a pre-Christian one, to convey the notion of initiation into the Cult of Adonis (Weston, *Quest of the Holy Grail*, pp. 77-79). The originator of this theory attempts to show that the Grail being thus envisaged, that achievement of the Quest can restore people to health and youth and can also restore waste regions to fertility. The notion of the vessel or chalice is also supposed to be accounted for by some nature cult ; though it is admitted that "in this branch of our investigation we are treading on less well-assured ground" (*ib.* p. 84). It is emphasised that the Adonis and kindred cults were essentially life cults, their aim being to preserve

the life of the land. The old mystery institutions have various grades and the Grail might have been represented by them in triple form; and this brings us to "the conception of the central dish of a ritual feast" which is the vessel entitled the Grail. This Vase and the Lance are then connected in this theory as phallic symbols (*ib.* p. 90). The essence of the initiation ceremony of the cult was to show the nature of regeneration and of spiritual life.

#### POINTS OF CONTACT BETWEEN MITHRAISM AND THE CULT OF THE GRAIL

It is not difficult to perceive that our theory of the origin of the Holy Grail in the Royal Glory (*Hvarenō*) of old Iran is itself a Ritual Theory, that it possesses all the merits of that Ritual Theory and solves several problems which as yet remain unsolved. In the first place, instead of merely *assuming* that the Adonis or the Eleusinian mysteries had penetrated old Britain, we can start with the historical fact that *Mithraism as a cult was well-known throughout ancient Britain*, at least wherever the Roman legions were quartered.

We note further that the cults of Mithra and of the Royal Glory were closely connected—if not indeed identical. For the Zamyād Yasht emphasises the fact that "when the Glory departed from Yima then Mithra seized that Glory" (§§ 35-36). The Royal Glory has, in the main, remained ever since in the possession of Mithra (Mihir Yasht, §§ 66-67). It is in the power of Mithra to take away the Royal Glory from nations or men "who delight in havoc", like

Afrāsiyāb and his Turanians (*ib.* s. 27). Again, in Yasht X. 16, we find Mithra regarded as "the spiritual Yazata who rides through all the Karshvares bestowing the *hvarēnō* (or Royal Glory)". Accordingly, wherever the cult of Mithraism went, the cult of the Royal Glory was sure to accompany it. Thus when Mithraism was Hellenized, the Royal Glory was translated into the designation of Tyche Basileos (*Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, VIII, 754).

The points of contact between Mithraism and the cult of the Grail deserve to be carefully investigated. To begin with, let us consider the 'talismans,' 'jewels' or 'treasures' connected with the Grail Legend. These were (a) the Cup, vase or caldron, (b) the Sword and (c) the Lance or spear. Now, even in their decayed stage, the Mithraic monuments and coins relating to Mithra reveal all these characteristic features. The cups, vases and plates are to be found in abundance in the Mithraeums. But, apart from that, the "craters" or vases, placed under the bull sacrificed by Mithra, form a most important and general feature of the sculptures representing the Taurobolium (cf. Cumont, *Monuments figurés relatifs aux Mystères de Mithra*, pp. 100-102). Cumont in his monumental work attaches great importance to these vases as representing the element of Water on the Mithraic monuments. Apart from this, the vases and crater represent the *Fons Aeterni* of life (*ib.* p. 137), which is also an important idea in the Grail Cult. Cumont would have attached even greater importance to these "craters" or "Kraters" had

he known that it is "the very word from which the word Grail is ultimately derived" (Loomis, *Celtic Myth and Arthurian Romance*, p. 290).

Next to the vase or cup, stand in importance the sword or dagger and the lance. Now in every representation of the *Mithra Tauroctone*, the god carries a short sword. And on various coins Mithra is represented as bearing the sword or sabre and the lance (see Cumont, *op. cit.* pp. 184-187). On these coins, Mithra bears a lance in the left hand and a sword in the right. Moreover, in the famous sculpture of Mithra, on the Nimrud Dag, Antiochos King of Kommagene carries a lance lowered before the god as a sign of respect (Sarre, *Die Kunst des Alten Persien*, plate 56). Since so much stress has been laid in the present essay on the analogies between the Holy Grail and the Royal Glory (*Hvarenō*), it might be added that on Bactrian and Indo-Scythian coins the *Hvarenō* also is depicted as armed with a lance (Cumont, *op. cit.* p. 136; Gardner, *The Parthian Coinage*, p. 152, No. 29).

In his great work "*Celtic Myth and Arthurian Romance*", Prof. R. S. Loomis has contended that the origins of the Arthurian Romance should be traced back to the mystery cults of the Cabeiroi and Curetes, of Cybele and of Demeter. And yet his valuable work affords support at every step to our hypothesis of the influence of Mithraism on the Grail Cult. There are great difficulties in the way of believing that the "myth and ritual which may have left the shores of Samothrace and of Crete perhaps

two thousand years before" formed the origins of the Grail Cult and of the Arthurian Saga. In order to connect the myths of these Mediterranean islands and the mythico-heroic legend of Arthur, Mr. Loomis is driven to make a great assumption. "The tradition must have been guarded from the beginning to almost the end by a priestly caste, who made it their pride to convey from generation, with due allowance for embroidery and harmonizing, the essential form of their sacred heritage" (p. 354). But is there the slightest historical vestige of the existence of any such priestly caste in Western Europe in history? Is there not, on the other hand, a complete certainty of the prevalence of Mithraic mysteries and exponents in these regions for centuries? Nor can we keep out the influence of Manichæism, which prevailed in parts of Europe for centuries and which bore great analogies and resemblances to Mithraism.

#### MITHRA AND MERLIN

On the other hand, in that work of Mr. Loomis, there is ample material for writing a thesis on the connection between the Arthurian romance, the Grail Cult and Mithraism. To begin with, it shows the influence of Mithraism upon that portion of the Celtic pantheon which comes to the fore in the Arthurian romance. Thus Merlin is a sun-god "who knows all, does all and sees all" (Loomis, *op. cit.* pp. 136 and 239). This shows that Merlin was, like Mithra, the god with "a thousand ears and ten thousand eyes" (cf. the Mihir Yasht). Merlin again is "the Giant Herds-

man" (*ib.* p. 134) while Mithra is the "lord of wide pastures". As a herdsman, Merlin holds "a great *club* in hand". In this respect, Merlin is again like Mithra, whose weapon is "a beautiful, well-falling *club* with a thousand knots, a hundred edges" (Mihir Yasht, § 132). Merlin "from a mountain top watches the courses of the stars" (Loomis, p. 129). Even so Mithra from his seat on Mount Hara Berezaiti "surveys everything that is between the earth and the heavens" (Mihir Yasht, § 95). Merlin further confers glory on Arthur as Mithra grants it to all earthly kings. Mr. Loomis adds significantly that the transformations of Merlin are matched by the metamorphoses of Curoi *who is also a sun-god*. In another portion of his work, Mr. Loomis observes that Dagda is also, according to high authority, a "beautiful god of the heathen", "the Red One of Great Knowledge" and the possessor of "a *club* which could crush bones as hailstones are crushed under the hoofs of horses" (*ib.* pp. 238-239). All these constitute a very fitting description of Mithra in the Mihir Yasht. It is supplemented by the fact that Dagda was the possessor of the caldron of plenty just as Mithra on the monuments feeds animals from the "crater" into which the blood of the bull flows. In fact the very name of Merlin is reminiscent of Mihir (Mithra).

But, besides Merlin, there are other Celtic gods who are closely related to Mithra. There is, for example, the Celtic deity Merdos between whom and Mithra scholars have seen a syncretism. Again, as

regards the Celtic deity Medru, his name is supposed to be only a Celticised form of Mithra. As between Arthur and Mithra, too, there is a connection through "Airem" and Aryamana, as Prof. Sir John Rhys has suggested.

A reference might also be made to names like *Dinsul* ("Mount of the Sun") and like *Sol*—the companion of Arthur—"who could stand all day upon one foot" and who has been identified with the Sun. This Sol can be identified easily with Sol Invictus or Mithra (Loomis, pp. 121 and 225). Moreover, the Grail heroes, Gawain, Lancelot, Boors, Perceval and Galaad, all "may claim to be young sun-gods" (Loomis, pp. 153-7), and some of them at least have "the familiar trait of increasing in strength till noon attributed to them" (*ib.* p. 154).

Other analogies too can be traced. For the Grail can change its geographical location; and we are told that "like Perceval in *Parlasraus*, Galaad after achieving the adventures of the Grail in the mainland castle sails out to sea to become King of an *island*, *whither the Grail is transferred*" (Loomis, p. 325). So, in the *Zamyād Yasht* (§§ 56, 59 and 62) we find that on three several occasions "the Glory fled away, the Glory changed its seat, and an arm of the sea Vouru-Kasha was produced". An equally interesting parallelism is to be noted in connection with the *Siege Perilous* which "brings down upon him who is unworthy to sit in it a fiery fate" (Loomis, pp. 223-4). The unworthy one who tries to sit on it is blasted by

lightning, while arrows and swords rain upon him. Mr. Loomis interprets this seat as the one destined for the Young *Sun* and lightning god. In this connection, it is remarkable that in the *Mihir Yasht* the chariot of Mithra moves forward containing thousands of arrows, spears, swords and maces (§§ 128-132), which keep falling on the heads of evil beings. There are however seats in this car for the friends and allies of Mithra like the angels Rashnu, Chista and Atar (fire). But there is no seat in the car for ordinary mortals. Rather the prayer goes up from these latter : " Oh ! may we never fall across the rush of the angry lord " when he is driving in his chariot drawn by four heavenly steeds. Curiously enough this prayer is repeated thrice (§§ 69, 98, 135), after descriptions of the chariot of Mithra. In the *Parzival* by Wolfram and in the *Conte del Graal* by Crestien de Troyes, the perilous seat is represented by a Marvellous Bed ; but, strangely enough, that bed is described as *having wheels under it*. This brings the Siege Perilous very near indeed to the chariot of Mithra.

One admires the learning and ingenuity of such writers on the topic of the Holy Grail as J. L. Weston, Dr. Nutt and Dr. Nitze. One may also add, in all humility, that they are on the right track in seeking the explanation of the legend of the Holy Grail in the Ritual Theory, as also in the teaching and in the rites of initiation of some ancient and pre-Christian Mystery. But one's surprise is all the greater on finding that they choose to concentrate their attention on the

mysteries of Adonis or of Eleusis while ignoring the great Mithraic Cult, which undoubtedly dominated ancient Britain and Gaul—i.e. the lands of the nativity of the cult of the Grail—as well as other Roman provinces. There can be no question that in each of the provinces, there must have been thousands on thousands of initiations into the Mithraic mysteries—initiations far outnumbering those into the cults of Adonis or Eleusis, at least so far as Western Europe was concerned. This is an undoubted and most important fact, and weighed against it “the tradition that the deities worshipped alike by the Irish and the Welsh were of Greek origin” sinks to the level of a mere surmise. We know further that Europe when it accepted Christianity retained many features of Mithraism—including even the Christmas day which was the birthday of Mithra. The memory of such borrowings from Mithraic beliefs might well account for the perplexing “elucidation” attributed to Master Blihis or Bleheris that

“ It is of the Grail of which none should

“ Tell or recount the secret ;

“ For such a thing might arise

“ Ere that the tale was all told

“ [Or ; For the tale, ere it was fully told,

“ Might stir up that by which]

“ That men might be grieved thereby

“ Who yet had not transgressed

\* \* \*

“ For if master Blihis lie not,

“ None should tell the secret ”.

It is obvious that these lines refer to the persecution by the Church which would be provoked if any avowedly Mithraic mysteries were practised. The Mithraic mysteries, supplemented by other beliefs about the Royal Glory, can solve most of the problems relating to the Quest of the Holy Grail. The quest of the Source of Life will be found to be a part of the cult of the Royal Glory which is Mithra's chief attribute; for the Glory can "smite away all plagues and endow one with a man's strength, a camel's strength, a horse's strength" (*Zamyād Yasht*, §§ 67-68); and "through it living creatures may keep away hunger and death" (*ib.* § 69). Then, again in the Mithraeums, we have Mithra armed *with the lance and the sword* (Forrer, *Das Mithra—Heiligtum von Königshofen*, p. 114). We have also sculptures of Mithraic communion feasts; and we actually possess broken *dishes, cups* and other vessels used formerly at the Mystery-feasts of Mithra. There we may be actually visualising one of those "central dishes of the ritual feast" with which it has been sought to identify the Holy Grail.

THE IDEALS OF THE ROUND TABLE ARE  
THOSE OF MITHRAISM

It may be noted that the ethics, the spirit and the ideals of the Round Table of Arthur's romance are the same as those of Mithraism. For one thing, *loyalty to the King* and obedience to him formed an important part of the teaching of Mithraism, and it hardly need be added that such loyalty formed a most important element in the idea of the Round Table.

As F. Cumont has put it: "The absolute faithfulness to the oath must have formed one of the most important virtues of a religion of soldiers (Mithraism) whose first act on being enrolled in an army consisted in swearing obedience and devotion to the leader" (*Die Orientalischen Religionen in Römischen Heidentum*, p. 179). Another aspect of Mithraism which must have been important in framing the idea of a Round Table was that the members of a Mithraic association were to each other as brothers and sons of a common father. As Cumont goes on to say, this idea might or might not have been as broad and comprehensive as that of Christian Charity which is universal. But in any case what was a Round Table in its essence but a *brotherhood of soldiers*? To quote the same author once more, "the brotherliness of the initiates who received the designation of 'soldiers' was nearer in its character to the comradeship which is usual in a regiment than to the love of one's neighbour".

After the notions of devotion to the King and of soldierly brotherhood, other basic ideas of the Round Table of Arthur were those of *purity* and *Knightly celibacy*. As Prof. Sir John Rhys has put it, the legends of the Grail have the central ethical "idea of glorifying the hero of chastity" (*Arthurian Legend* p. 173), and that it is the solar heroes like Gwalchmei, Peredur and Owen that possess this virtue preeminently. Well might the learned professor wonder whence this idea of continence and chastity found its way into ancient Welsh literature. But the idea of

physical and moral purification was never so well-developed as in Mithraism. In the words of Dr. Farnell "no religion of the world has placed itself so perfectly in the service of ideals of purification" as Mithraism. (Farnell, *Evolution of Religion*, p. 127). Cumont has emphasised even more the ideals of purity and celibacy as exemplified in Mithraism: "This perfect purity distinguished the Persian mysteries from those of all other oriental gods. Serapis is the brother as well as the consort of Isis; Attis is loved by Cybele; each Baal of Syria is tied to a wife—Mithra lives alone, Mithra is chaste, Mithra is holy. And in the place of the worship of the fertility of Nature a new worship is erected—that of Continence" (Cumont, *op. cit.* p. 181). Need we point out that knightly continence and celibacy are the chief virtue which Arthur devoutly *attempted* to inculcate into his Round Table? Thus, the Grail is always borne by a maiden, and in the castle of Maidens we find that "the Fairy Castle has become a nunnery" (Weston, *Legend of Sir Perceval*, p. 263). Be it noted also that the Iranian Dualism, which lies behind Mithraism, supplies the motive for the formation of Round Tables of which the knights are vowed to attack Evil and all its forms on Earth.

It might also be added that it was in the power of Mithraism to furnish those isles of the blest—those *Avallons* or "Lands Overseas" required for heroes like Arthur to rest after their labours. While, to the followers of Serapis, the place of the blessed was somewhere underground and in the depths of the Earth,

the Mithraist avoided these dark dominions and followed the soul to the islands of light in the planetary and stellar spheres, where it could rest after throwing off the fardels of senses and passions (Cumont, *op. cit.* p. 183). Similarly, when Mithraism entered China under the name of Amidism, it contributed to the Chinese religion the beautiful ideal of the "Paradises of the West". The Chinese name is significant because the land when Mithraism had its birth (Iran) lay to the west of China.

#### (b) THE ADONIS THEORY

Miss Weston has advanced the hypothesis, in her admirably written *Quest of the Holy Grail*, that "the secret of the Holy Grail is to be found in the ceremony of initiation of the cult of Adonis or Tammuz. The theory explains the presence of weeping women in the Grail legends, while the Grail itself is interpreted as the central dish of the ritual feast of Adonis. The wasting of the land is also explained by the waning powers of the Sun in autumn and winter—as also the Maimed King and the Dead Knight on the altar in the chapel" (*ib.* p. 89). "The Vase or Cup and the Lance are however difficult to explain on this hypothesis, and hence a phallic significance is attempted to be ascribed to them" (*ib.* p. 90).

The ingenuity with which the theory has been expounded is however fully equalled by the difficulties in the way of the hypothesis. It is not proved at all that the cult of Adonis was markedly prevalent in the countries in which the Grail Cult was popular

in the Middle Ages. Miss Weston is constrained to quote the opinion of a single authority, and to observe that "Vellay is clearly of opinion that, at a certain stage of development, the Adonis ritual assumed the character of a mystery" (*Quest of the Holy Grail*, p. 86).

But much more evidence would be required before we can accept the prevalence of the Adonis mystery in the lands in which the Grail *saga* prevailed later. Thus Sir James Frazer when speaking of the adaptation by the Christian Church of some features of the Adonis cult observes as follows:—"But this adaptation probably took place in the Greek-speaking rather than in the Latin-speaking parts of the ancient world; for the worship of Adonis, while it flourished among the Greeks, appears to have *made little impression on Rome and the West*" (*Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, Vol. I, p. 306). Some of the available evidence goes indeed to show that even where the cult of Adonis existed it was only as an ancillary to Mithraism. Thus Dr. R. Forrer notes that in the Mithraeums, Attis often appears among the deities in the following of Mithra (*Das Mithra, Heiligtum von Königshofen*, Stuttgart, 1915, p. 48). This shows that the cult of Adonis enjoyed only a minor importance compared to that of Mithra even where it existed in Europe. In a sense, indeed, Adonis was only a form of Sol Invictus or Mithra; for Adonis is identified directly with Attis and indirectly with the Sun (cf. Legge, *Forerunners and Rivals of Christianity*,

Vol. I, pp. 118 and 137). Miss Weston attaches great weight to Vellay's views ; but more recently Dr. T. G. Pinches has disputed the motion of Vellay about regarding Tammuz or Adonis as a martyr god dying for the good of mankind. Rather his death is due to "the evil influences of the spouse of Nergal, the god of battle, distress and untimely death" (*ERE*, Vol. XII, p. 191).

It might also be noted, that the whole spirit of the cult of Adonis was quite different from that of the Grail legends. Weeping women and imprisoned maidens do indeed play a part in the latter ; but the main feature consists of the knightly and manly exploits of heroes like Perceval, Gawain and Arthur. This spirit is very similar to that of Mithraism which has been noted as a particularly virile religion by Cumont and others. It is indeed remarkable how clearly the *Mihir Yasht* presupposes the existence of a Knightly order. In section 11 of that liturgy, Mithra is described as one "whom the horsemen worship on the back of their horses, begging swiftness for their teams, health for their own bodies and that they may watch with full success those who hate them, smite down their foes and destroy at one stroke their adversaries." On the other hand the Syrian cults which came to Rome were dominated by goddesses like Atargatis or Astarte and *Dea Syria* (Cumont, *Orientalischen Religionen*, p. 120). Moreover, while both Mithraism and the Grail Cult place the highest value on continence and Knightly celibacy, the Syrian

cults were notoriously lax in this respect. If we give a phallic interpretation to the Spear, the Cup and the "drops of blood", we are surely going against the very spirit of the Grail cult even though we may be correctly describing the dramas relating to the nuptials of Anatolian deities (cf. Legge, *Forerunners and Rivals of Christianity*, II, 30). On the other hand, "It was in the religion of Mithra that chastity became more than a mere ceremonial prescription and entered into the spiritual side of life" (Dr. J. B. Carter in *ERE*, III, 497). Finally, Mr. A. E. Waite has also pointed out very pertinently that "the rites of Adonis cannot explain a mystery which knows nothing of a dead or risen god".

What merit the Adonis theory possesses consists in its ability to explain the Dead Knight lying on the bier in the chapel, the Weeping Women, the Vase and the "drops of blood". But it is not as if these motifs were absent from the Kai Khusrau legend in the Iranian epic. They are all met with as preliminaries to the "Vengeance quest" or "Feud" carried on by that central figure of the Iranian epic. Thus the Knightly body found on the bier forms a riddle in the legend of Perceval, and we cannot even guess what its true significance is. But in the "Vengeance quest" of Kai Khusrau, it can be made to correspond with the dead body of the father of that prince (Siyāwash) with whose death the vendetta starts. Consequently, the presentation of the dead Knight's body on the bier forms a very necessary preliminary

to the Vengeance quest. This is indeed an important matter to note, since it forms the natural starting point of the "Vengeance quest" alike of Perceval and of Kai Khusrau. So also the "drops of blood" in the Grail Saga correspond to the drops of blood of Siyāwash, which fell on the ground as his throat was being cut by the orders of the Turanian King. Those drops of blood were indeed miraculous in character, since vegetation of a character most beneficial to mankind grew up where they fell. To quote Firdausi :

بساعت گیاهی از انخون برست      جز ایزد که داند که آن چون برست  
کیا را دهم من کنونت نشان      که خوانی و را خون اسیاوشن  
بسی فایده خلق راهست ازوی      که هست آن کیا اصلش ازخون اوی

There is also the parallel myth in Mithraism that vegetation grows on earth as Mithra sacrifices the bull and the blood of the latter fertilises the ground. In these ways the Iranian tradition, whether Mithraic or epic, fully accounts for the "drops of blood", which form such an important feature of the Grail Cult. Finally, even "the Weeping Women" are accounted for in the Iranian epic, though in the Grail narratives they remain a mystery. For, when Siyāwash is slain, his wife (the mother of Kai Khusrau) wept bitterly not only because her husband was slain but for another important reason as well. For the Turanian King was afraid that if the child which was then in her womb were born it would avenge its murdered father. He therefore ordered her to be dragged about and beaten in the hope that the embryo-

might be destroyed. However, his wicked wish was not realized, and Kai Khusrau was born to pursue successfully that "Vengeance quest" which the Turanian King had dreaded so much.

Now we see how the Iranian legend helps us to interpret the vision in "the *Perilous Chapel*," which is found in many of the Grail romances. There in the chapel is found the dead Knight on the bier and there again are the Weeping Women. We have also the "outburst of grief which accompanies the appearance of the Lance". All these *motifs* appear at the very beginning of the Grail romances; and the Iranian epic tells us why. King Kai Khusrau was taken to a *fire temple* and made to swear eternal revenge on the Turanian King :

چو بشنید ازو شهریار جوان      سوی آتش آورد روی و روان  
بزهار در دست دستم نهاد      چنین عهد و سوگند و این رسم و داد

Naturally, in that temple when vowing vengeance, he would recall to his mind the body of his murdered father and his mother weeping over the latter. Such visions are obviously the best preparation and starting points for the "Vengeance quest", alike in the *Shāhnāme* and in the Grail romance. Only in the former, however, we have the *rationale* of such visions fully brought out.

(c) THEORY CONCERNING THE MYSTERIES OF ELEUSIS  
AND OF SAMOTHRACE

The high authority of Dr. Nitze might be cited for tracing the origins of the Grail Legend to the

Eleusinian mysteries. But Miss Weston has already pointed out the weak point in that theory which over-emphasises the fact of the "uncle-and-nephew" relation subsisting between Perceval and the Grail King (Weston, *Quest*, pp. 128-131). It might be added that in the Grail Legend we have hardly any one corresponding to Iacchos who plays such a great part in the Eleusinian mysteries and who is the father, son and spouse of Persephone. Moreover, as Mr. E. A. Waite has argued, "the rapture and restoration of Persephone are foreign to a Cycle of Romance in which no goddess figures" (Waite, *op. cit.* pp. 6-7). We also know some of the features of the Eleusinian mysteries, e. g., "the transfer of sacred objects from the basket to the box and from the box to the basket"; and to these the Grail Legend affords no parallels (*ERE*, IX, 78). On the other hand, the numerous Solar heroes of the Grail legend seem to have had no counterpart in the Eleusinian mysteries so far as they are known.

Mr. Loomis, in his valuable study of *Celtic Myth and Arthurian Romance*, would have us resort to the mysteries of Samothrace and cults of Crete to find the origins of the Grail Legend (Loomis, *op. cit.* pp. 285-295). Before venturing to offer a few remarks on this theory, it might be remarked that owing to that *Theocrasia* (the tendency to consider as identical divinities with the same or similar characteristics) which was so prevalent in India, Egypt and Greece in antiquity, it is difficult to keep apart the cults of Adonis, of Eleusis and of Samothrace (Legge, *op. cit.*

I, 15; Dyer, *Gods in Greece*, pp. 73-74 and 178-9). Thus Demeter and Persephone are "regarded as one, being so filled with mutual love"; Attis is identified with Dionysos, Adonis, Osiris and the Sun. Further, Attis, Adonis and Dionysos are "represented as of both sexes" and cannot be kept very clearly apart from goddesses. Thus the Adonis theory and the Samothrace theory of the origins of the Grail Legend tend to merge into each other, and arguments against the one tell against the other also.

Moreover there is little proof of the existence of the cults of Demeter and Kore in ancient Britain, except a remark of Strabo, who, as a philosophic observer, might well have shared the tendency to *theocrasia* or to the identification of classical and local goddesses. It might well be asked whether any "Kabeireion" has been excavated or found in England or France? With the absence of any such "Kabeireion" in these regions we might contrast the presence of hundreds of Mithraeums in the same region. Moreover, the names and functions of the chief gods of the Samothracian cult—like (Axio) Keros, (Axio) Kersa and Eros would have to be brought into the general framework of the Grail Legend (cf. *ERE*, IX, 79). Needless to say they are conspicuous by their absence in that legend.

### (c) THE FOLK-LORE THEORY

The hypotheses regarding the Mithraic origins of the Arthurian and the Grail Cycles solve another great and baffling problem—why should the (apparent-

ly) Welsh legends of Arthur and of the Holy Grail receive such wide and enthusiastic acceptance not only in Armorica but over France and Germany? It is Cumont—the greatest authority on Mithraism—who has pointed out that among all Oriental cults none has possessed such a strong and compact a system as Mithraism—none that has such a moral elevation or such power to captivate hearts and souls. He adds that the Iranian Dualism working through Mithraism has given to Europe ideas which are still active and influential. A knowledge of that great offensive and defensive power, which this great *savant* ascribes to Iranian religion and tradition, might well prepare us to find its influence both in the cult of the Holy Grail and in the *saga* of Arthur. The lands in which Mithraism flourished, most under the Roman Empire, would have their folk-lore saturated by Mithraic conceptions and their allied ideas; and it is there that we might expect and find warm welcome to, and a rapid efflorescence of, the *sagas* of the Holy Grail and of the Round Table. Allowance, of course, will have to be made for the existence of patrons of poetic versions such as Philip of Flanders and Joanna of Flanders as well as for the attitude of the local ecclesiastical authorities. To that extent there is undoubtedly truth in the Folk-lore theory of the Holy Grail. Only, it may be noted that, such folk-lore might have behind it half-forgotten traditions of that Mithraism which flourished for centuries over great portions of Europe. The Folk-lore theory does not in

any way contradict the theory that has been put forward in these pages. For Mithraism had formed important syntheses with local beliefs and cults, and was thus enabled to survive, in some way, the great persecution that broke upon it after the death of its last patron—Julian (Forrer, *op. cit.* 128). Thus, there was a synthesis of Mithra with the Celtic god Merdos or Mars Halamarthus (*ib.* 110). So also the Celtic god Medru has been supposed to be a Celticised form of Mithra (*ib.* pp. 110 and 127). The great prevalence and the surviving influence of Mithraism in parts of Gaul and in Roman Germany is thus rendered understandable. Eminent authorities believe that the Church directed its persecution against Mithraism much earlier than against Paganism in general. For it had to reckon with the many followers of the latter in the army. But, as it happened, Mithraism managed to survive, at least partially, by effecting syntheses with local cults of gods and by thus entering the local folk-lore. Thus, besides the Celtic god Merdos, we have a god called Cissonius who is mentioned in a Mithraeum (*ib.* pp. 49 and 88). There are eminent scholars, like Prof. Sir John Rhys and Dr. Alfred Nutt, who connect Arthur and other heroes with Celtic gods and culture-heroes. It is not unlikely that through such developments, the Mithraic tradition might have made itself felt in the field of medieval European romance, since Mithra had secured for himself quite a number of “doppel-gangers” in the form of Celtic gods.

Finally, neither the Folk-lore theory nor the Ritual theory can account for the connection of the Grail Legend with the Legend of King Arthur. Even such an early authority as Robert de Borron found great difficulty in combining the Grail and Arthur themes. Some believe that Robert de Borron had himself combined the Grail saga and the Arthur saga, others that he had found them already combined in some Latin source. Another view is that it was left to Chrestien de Troyes to unite the two sagas (cf. Baumgartner, *Geschichte der Weltliteratur*, Vol. V, p. 95). But if our theory of the Grail being identical with the Royal Glory is accepted, there will be no difficulty in explaining the connection. For, in the Iranian legends, which doubtless accompanied Mithraism into ancient Britain, we have the common parentage of the Arthurian Cycle and the Quest of the Holy Grail. The presence and importance of Arthur in both the Cymric and Welsh traditions are accounted for, since the Iranian legends, in which Kai Khusrau and his Round Table figured so largely, were extremely likely to influence the lands where Mithraism had secured for generations such an important footing. For, the garrisons, which manned the Walls of Severus and Hadrian, contained a great many devotees of Mithraism. We note in particular that Mithraic monuments and descriptions are to be found in ancient Britain in the forts near the Vallum in Northern Britain and at Caerleon-on-Usk or York.

POINTS OF GEOGRAPHICAL CONTACT BETWEEN CELTIC  
AND MITHRAIC PRIESTHOODS

We have just seen how the various Mithræa, scattered over Britain, Gaul and Belgium, would introduce the Celtic race to the Mithraic and Iranian traditions. In Great Britain, not only the Roman walls but numerous places like London, Chester, Rutchester, Otterburn-Tower—to mention but a few—have been found to have contained Mithræa. So also in France, Belgium and Roman Germany, Mithra worship had spread.

But this was not the only way in which the Celtic race was brought into contact with Mithraism and the Iranian traditions. Thus the late M. Henri Hubert, Director of Studies at the Ecole des Hautes-Etudes, has emphasised the fact that the whole Celtic world—spread from Ireland at one end to Asia Minor on the other—“was in communication, was inter-connected, must have had resemblances.” This solidarity of the Celtic peoples was explained to a considerable extent by the common and all-pervading institution of Druidism. It was a truly international institution, and the Celts “owed to these professional teachers moral ideas, conceptions about the future life, mythological traditions, ritual practices and legal solutions which they all had in common” (Hubert, *The Greatness and Decline of the Celts*, pp. 187-188). Similarly, Dr. J. A. MacCulloch has shown that the Council of 300 men called *drunemeton*, which used to meet in Galatia in Asia Minor, was a council of

Druids. Dr. MacCulloch also draws attention to a quotation of Diogenes Laertius from Aristotle in which the existence of Druids in Galatia was asserted. Thus, there are proofs that the Druids, who had spread from Ireland on the one hand to Asia Minor on the other, were in communication with each other and were thus in a position to imbibe Eastern mythology and cults as well as religious beliefs and traditions. In fact, such an international institution as the Druids, with a chain of colonies from Asia to the Atlantic, would form an excellent medium for the conveyance of Oriental beliefs and cults to the farthest limits of the Western world.

We know also that from the time of the Achaemenian Kings downwards, there were important *Magian* colonies in Asia Minor; and thus the two priesthoods—the Magians and the Druids—would come into direct contact with one another. This would greatly facilitate the passing over of Iranian traditions into Celtic lands like Britain and Gaul. We are further aware of what an important part Asia Minor had played as one of the cradles of Mithraism. This would show how Mithraic traditions would enter Celtic beliefs long before the advent of the Roman Empire.

We are thus prepared for the various analogies between the Celtic and Indo-Iranian cultures which have been pointed out by scholars like the late Henri Hubert and M. Vendryes (in the *Memoires de la Societe de linguistique, Paris*). As M. Hubert has observed "nothing could be liker to the Druids than

the Brahmins of India and the Magi of Irān, except perhaps the College of Pontifices at Rome and the Flamens attached to it. The Flamen has the same name as the Brahmin, and M. Vendryes has shown the similarity between the terms relating to priests and sacrifices. The priesthoods are not merely very similar, but exactly the same, and *they are preserved nowhere so completely as at the two opposite ends of the Indo-European world*. Between the two, the remnants of similar priesthoods once survived, *as in Thrace and among the Getae*" (ib. p. 190).

The above views are worth noting especially in connection with the theories which find the origins of the Quest of the Holy Grail in the cults of Samothrace or in Folk-lore. *The direct contact of Druidism with Iranian priesthood, beliefs and legends for several hundred years is, it is respectfully submitted, a most important factor in the origin and development of the Grail Legend.*

#### THE "QUEST" IN THE INDO-ARYAN TEXTS AND IN THE AVESTA

##### (a) THE "FISHER KING" AND THE "CHURNING OF THE OCEAN"

It was said at the beginning of this study that the idea of the "Holy Grail" or Glory was to be found among several Aryan nations. This is best illustrated by a reference to the shape which the idea has taken in the Indo-Aryan texts and in the Indian Epics. In these ancient treasuries of Aryan conceptions there is described a great conflict between the Asuras

and the Devas for the Amrita (Ambrosia), Lakshmi (the goddess of wealth), the Earth with its treasures, and the Cow. In these four aspects are to be found the basic ideas of the Holy Grail as providing nourishment, strength, prosperity and immunity from disease. There is also a great deal of parallelism between the quest as represented in the Avesta and the Indo-Aryan texts. Thus the Mahābhārata refers to the churning of the ocean to obtain from it Lakshmi, Amrita, the Cow and other treasures. So in the Avesta, it is the ocean Vouru-Kasha which is the home of the *Hvareno* or Royal Glory and from which the Turanian Afrāsiyāb would bring it out by diving into the ocean. The idea of "Churning" gods corresponds to that of the "Fisher-King" in the Grail Legend and to that of "diving" in the Zamyād Yasht. As G. Duméznil has assumed in his *Le Festin d'Immortalité*, there is an Indo-European myth or the winning of the drink of immortality. But, we must go beyond him somewhat and show that we are not dealing with a legend of the Drink of Immortality only, but with the idea of a *complex of treasures* including, besides the means of health or Immortality, those of Royalty and power in general. For, it is in this combination of these triple set of ideas that the three legends with which we are concerned—the Iranian, the Indian and the Celtic—differ from others relating to the Drink of Immortality. Thus, in the Vedas, the strife of the Deva and the Asura is not merely over the cow created by Prajāpati (*Taittirīya-Brāhmaṇa* I. i, 10) but over the food, wealth and the

earth owned by the Asuras (*Taittirīya Samhita* VI. 2, 4) and over Ambrosia which Cusna, the Asura, had seized. This latter meant of course that the conflict was about Royalty or Royal Glory. It is this combination of all desirable objects—spiritual as well as material—which gives its characteristic lustre and poetic potentialities alike to the Grail and the Glory or *Hvarenō*.

Incidentally, it might be pointed out that another excellent Iranian parallel to the "churning" of the ocean is to be found in the Farvardin Yasht (§ 55), where the Fravashis are described as bringing out of the ocean not only water but also the *Hvarenō*, which is the talisman at once of prosperity, royalty and abundance.

The "quest" is, as we have seen, not only for Ambrosia and for Royal Power, but for *wealth* as personified by Çri or by Lakshmi. Thus, in the Ashi Yasht, Ashi, who is the Goddess of Fortune and Wealth, thus speaks of the quest for her in which the Iranian Naotaras and the Turanians joined: "The Turanians and the swift-horsed Naotaras clapping their hands, *ran after me*." So, the Asuras, who stole Amrita, also demanded Lakshmi, both of which had been obtained by churning the ocean in harmony, in the first instance. As Fausboll has stated, the war between the Devas and the Asuras was "a struggle for the mastery of the three worlds and for the imperial power." From the beginning, Çri, the goddess of prosperity, lived with the Asuras but forsook them later on (*Indian Mythology*, pp. 39-41). It need scarcely be

added that both Lakshmi and Ashi were prosperity personified (Ashi Yasht, §§ 6-15). This is another aspect of the Grail, which is not only the source of spiritual life but a food-supplying vessel or the Cornucopia of general abundance. Moreover, we should remember that "the Grail was wrought of fine gold, and adorned with precious stones" (Weston, *Legend of Sir Perceval*, p. 154). Thus in the Vedas and the Indian epics, the Devas and the Asuras are rivals in the quest for power, plenty and prosperity, just as in the Zamyād Yasht, as we have seen, the Divine powers and the powers of Evil strive for the Royal Glory throwing darts at each other.

So far as the idea of a merely food-supplying vessel goes, we have got another parallel in the Vana Parva of the Mahābhārata. There King Yudhishtira prays from the waters to the Sun to supply him with the means of feeding his following of Brāhmanas. The Sun responds by bestowing on him a copper vessel which provides food for him and his whole following for five or seven years together.\*

(b) THE "CUP" AS THE CHIEF INSTRUMENT OF SACRIFICE

Both in the Yashts and the Vedas, the conflict between the Devas and the Asuras is carried out by means of *sacrifices*. Thus, in the *Taittirīya Samhita*, the Devas conquered the Asuras by the Abhyātāna Sacrifice (T. S. iii. 4.6) and rites of the ten nights (T. S. vii. 2.5), fifteen nights (T. S. vii 3.7) and twenty-one

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\* This analogue was kindly pointed out to me by Prof. A.B. Gajendragadkar, M.A.

nights (T. S. vii. 3.9). So, in the Yashts like the Ābān Yasht, Gosh Yasht and Rām Yasht, the Aryan princes of ancient Irān offer sacrifices to various deities for success against their non-Aryan foes, and the refrain arises that "I may be as constantly victorious as any one of all the Aryans" (Bahram Yasht, § 60).

*A propos* of these sacrifices, an analogue might be suggested for the "cup", which played such an important part both in the Grail Legend and in the legends of Kai Khusrau. For, in course of ceremonies, the gods or Devas drew the various cups, *e. g.* the Upāmsu cup (T. S. vi. 4.6), the Āgrayana cup (T. S. vi. 4.11) and the Ukthya cup (T. S. vi. 5.1). These were sacrificial cups of great potency; and they did "test veracity" as required both by Celtic and Iranian tradition, since the Devas won the conquest through their superior regard for truth and spiritual laws. We have narrated how in the hands of King Kai Khusrau, his famous cup showed the marvels of the whole world and tested the veracity of heroes. The importance of the Cup or the Chalice in the legend of the Holy Grail need hardly be emphasised. There, however, the idea of sacrifice is replaced by the closely connected notion of a spiritual struggle characterised by holiness and asceticism; and in connection with this aspect of the Grail Legend, we have to bear in mind the modifications received by the legend since the introduction of Christianity.

(c) THE IMPORTANCE OF FIRE IN THE CELTIC AND  
INDO-IRANIAN LEGENDS

Let us pass on to *Agni*, who played an important

part in the "quest" both in the Indian and in the Iranian version. Thus, Agni was the champion of the Devas and it was with his help that they overcame the Asuras (T. S. vi. 3. 10 and T. S. vi. 2. 2). If the Devas succeeded in their struggle with the Asuras through sacrifice, Agni is the sacrificer *par excellence* "and he serves as the model for sacrificers" (Keith, *op. cit.* p. 159). In the Zamyād Yasht, too, when "the Good spirit and the Evil one did struggle with one another" for the Royal Glory on the supra-mundane plane, Ātar (the deity of fire) played a great part in the conflict. He wanted to seize the Glory. But he and his opposite number Azi (the dragon) were evenly matched, and "each took back his hand, as the instinct of life prevailed" (§§ 48 and 50). That Glory was at last seized by Apām Napāt. Now, as both Spiegel and Darmesteter have shown, Apām Napāt is "the fire-god born from the cloud in the lightning"; while Sir A. B. Keith observes "Apām Napāt is the same god as Agni" (Keith, *op. cit.* p. 136). Hence the final honours did go to the deity of fire. Correspondingly, in the Grail Legend, we have many of the heroes, like Galaad (Galahad) who secured the Grail, wearing garments of a *fiery* description. Thus, Galaad wears "red arms and a coat of red sendal, and later, it is interpreted as the color of fire" (Loomis, *op. cit.* p. 216 quoting from H. O. Sommer, *Vulgate Version of the Arthurian Romances*, VI, 57). Similarly, the knight Boors is "clad in a robe of vermeil samite." Further, the hero Lug, who was the prototype of Lancelot, "was

of a red colour from evening till morning and whose face shone as the sun". Thus, the leading knights of the Round Table are shown to be heroes, who are closely related to the element of fire.

(d) THE BASIS OF POLITICAL OBLIGATION

The Indian and Iranian mythologies also agree in attempting to find a basis for political obligation in the ideas of the "Quest". For, it is through Prajāpati, who at once symbolises and devises sacrifice that the Devas triumph over the Asuras. Proceeding further, we find that Kingship is explained by the fact that Kings represent Prajāpati (Keith, *op. cit.* pp. 471 and 481). So, in the Avesta, it is Mithra, who can bestow the Royal Glory, or, at his will, divert it from nations "who delight in havoc" (Mihir Yasht, § 27). As in Iranian legends so in Indian ones, Mitra enjoys the attributes of sovereignty or *Kshatra* and he is pre-eminently designated as "the ruler". Similarly also, in the legend of the Holy Grail, as related by Wau-chier de Denain, the Fisher-King carries the Grail with him wherever he goes (Weston, *Legend of Sir Perceval*, p. 23), and it is at the end of his adventures (relating to the Grail) that Perceval is hailed by the King as his heir. Thus the Grail is, like the Glory, the credential of Kings.

LAKSHMI, ASHI AND GUINEVERE

Perhaps some side-light might also be thrown from Indian and Iranian mythology on the "fickleness" of Guinevere and her *liability to repeated abduction or capture* by knights like *Melwas* or *Lancelot*, *Boors*

or *Falerin*. For, the repeated abduction of Guinevere is a curiosity of mythology, which deserves to be noted. We have good authority for the legends that Mordred, Boors and Gawain were among these abductors (Loomis, p. 342, quoting Sommer IV. 310 and Chrestien). For the episodes of her abduction by Melwas and Falerin, the reader might be referred to Prof. Sir John Rhys's work on the *Arthurian Legend* (pp. 56 and 68). It is true that at present, the idea of the identity of Guinevere with Proserpine holds the field, and is backed up by very high authority. It originated with M. Gaston Paris, who saw the similarity between the rape of Proserpine by Pluto and the abduction of Guinevere by Melwas. That opinion is backed up by such authorities as Prof. Rhys, who would make of Melwas "an echo of the King of the other world." There is some difficulty, however, in splitting up even "the gloomy Dis" into so many Celtic abductors.

But the fickleness of Guinevere might be explained not only by attempting to identify her with Proserpine but with some other goddess of Aryan mythology. Thus we read in *Mahābhārata* (XII, 225, 228) of the "fickleness" of Ōri or Lakshmi who "lived once with the Dānavas, then with the gods, and then with Indra" (Jacobi in *ERE*, II, 808). The goddess Lakshmi is indeed an excellent parallel for Queen Guinevere for it is said of the former: "inconstant and capricious art and thou associatest with many." She herself is made to observe that amongst the people

with whom she dwells "neither is there any god whatsoever, or gandharva to be found or Asura or rākshasa, not one who is able to bear me, O Purandara" (Fausboll, *Indian Mythology*, p. 106).

Besides Lakshmi or Çri, there is Shachi (the wife or queen of Indra) who has also points of contact with Guinevere. For her very name signifies greatness, and she is the consort of any one who succeeds to the position and greatness of Indra.

So, in the Yasht pertaining to the goddess Ashi, who is the Iranian counterpart of Çri or Lakshmi, she is represented as quite impartial as between the Turanians, who are synonymous in the Avesta with the Dānus or Dānavas, and the Iranians, as represented by the Naotaras.\* In the Astād Yasht, she is made almost an aspect of Royal Glory; for power and abundance come to the King when "she (Ashi) comes in, inside his fine royal palace" (§ 4).

Now the queen of Arthur, Guinevere, represented both beauty and Royal fortune—which are also the common characteristics of Çri or Lakshmi and Ashi. Moreover, since it has been shown "that the English *Sir Percyvalle* represents queen Guinevere with a golden cup" which was a form both of the Grail and of the Cornucopia, that is an additional feature of resemblance between Arthur's queen and the goddess

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\* Here we find a very important point of contact between the cults of Ashi and of Çri. For the latter was pursued by the Turanians, while the latter "lived with the Dānavas". Both in the Ābān Yasht (§ 78) and Farvardin Yasht (§ 38), the Dānus (Dānavas) are identified with the Turanians.

of fortune (Loomis, p. 229 and *Modern Philology*, Vol. XXII, 92-5). Finally, if Guinevere was abducted, not by Lancelot alone, as in later forms of the Arthurian legend, but by other Knights like Boors and Gawain Mordred and Melwas or even Kei (Loomis, 342 ; Prof. Sir John Rhys, *The Arthurian Legend*, pp. 56-60), that is an additional reason in favour of the hypothesis that Guinevere represents the fickle goddess of Fortune. The abduction of Guinevere is not seasonal as is that of Proserpine, nor is it due to the same gloomy personality as in the case of Proserpine. We may grant with Prof. Rhys that Melwas or Morois was "an echo of the Aryan myth regarding the King of the Other World." But the same cannot be asserted of all other captors of Guinevere. Nor can we disregard the other and even more important Aryan myth of the apparent fickleness of the goddess of Fortune. That other myths than those of Proserpine can throw light on the problem of Guinevere and her captors is borne out by Miss J. L. Weston's suggestion that the story of *The Three Days' Tournament* "gave the initial suggestion for the immortal loves of Lancelot and Guinevere" (*Quest of the Holy Grail*, pp. 67-68).

After all, we can trust the old bards to know their business and not to spoil their epic by making an ordinary wanton the heroine of their works. Nor is it only the Arthurian legend in which a Guinevere figures. Thus, in the epic of Cuchulainn, the lady Morrighu transfers her regard from an older to a young-

ger sun-hero (Rhys, *Hibbert Lectures* of 1886, pp. 468-471 and *Arthurian Legend*, pp. 111-112). The bards knew well that figures like Guinevere and Morrigu symbolised *Fortune which is ever unstable* by its nature, and that such transfer of regard involves no disgrace for either side, though it may often be the harbinger of great tragedies.

Hitherto the exponents of the Arthurian legend have been apologetic when they approach the topic of Guinevere's character. Thus Prof. Rhys in his admirable study begins his chapter on the Queen by quoting an old rhyme which has perpetuated her unpopularity, and then he proceeds to ask—"How did Guinevere acquire her notoriety?" But, according to the view propounded here, there is nothing disgraceful to be explained away. If Arthur is the Solar or Culture hero and the Grail is the Royal Glory, Guinevere is the Royal fortune. As every one knows Royal fortune ("Rāja Lakshmi" to use the Sanskrit equivalent) is never stable and always passes from one favourite to another. To say that Guinevere's infidelity led to the catastrophe of Camlan is only to observe that the good fortune of Arthur deserted him before the battle. Dr. Nutt's dictum that such a person as Guinevere "might woo without forfeiting womanly modesty in virtue of her goddesshood" supports the thesis put forward here.

CAUSES OF THE GREATER DEVELOPMENT OF THE  
\*                   CULT OF ROYAL GLORY IN IRAN

But while, as shown above, the essentials of the

cult of the Royal Glory (*Hvarenā*) are to be found in the Vedas and in the Indian epics, that cult attained greater prominence and importance in ancient Irān than in old India; and a number of reasons might be assigned for this difference. In the first place, there can be no doubt that Dualism played a less important part in the sphere of Hinduism than in the Iranian religions. The opposition of Devas and Asuras forms no doubt a sort of Dualism, but not such as to prevent the Indian philosopher from "regarding the world as a single whole animated by one spirit". In fact the Indian mind was inclined to accept Monism on the whole; while "a tendency towards dualistic conceptions, or, perhaps, we may say, towards bilateral symmetry, seems to be an essential characteristic of the Iranian mind" (Casartelli). And it is in this eternal warfare between Good and Evil that we find the basis of the various "quests" including the quest of the Grail or Glory. For, the powers of Good and Evil keep struggling for domination and sovereignty of this world. Sometimes this sovereignty or the kingdom of this world passes to the powers of Evil; and correspondingly in a striking passage of the Gospels, Satan is described as "the Prince of this world." But the followers of the good side also make it their business to engage persistently in the "quest" of this Royal Glory and to win it back for their side. Hence the exploits of heroes of the Round Tables of Kai Khusrau, or of Arthur, for the Royal Glory or the Holy Grail.

Then, again, neither the cult of Prajāpati (who

was the prototype of royalty) nor that of Mitra (the possessor of the attributes of sovereignty or *Kshatra* and the independent and universal ruler of *Samraj*) found a proper development in India. If, indeed, the cult of Prajāpati did find increased acceptance, it was not on the side of political significance, but on the metaphysical side, as one in whom the cosmological and pantheistic views of the more reflective section of the priesthood found their expression" (Keith, *op. cit.* p. 101). Later on, he became "the artificer of gods" (A. A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, p. 118). Mitra too, remained in course of time "little but a name." Perhaps this decline of the importance of the older deities was due to "the admixture of races", as Sir A. B. Keith has suggested. But, even from the start, Mitra kept losing his individuality to Varuna with whom he was constantly associated and "had hardly an independent trait left" (A. A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, p. 27). This decline of the cult of Mitra was made up for, to a certain extent, by the growth in the importance of Indra, who became the helper of the Aryans against the Panis, and other non-Aryan foes and gave their lands to the Aryans.

Far different was the development of the cult of Mithra in Irān. As the god of light, of truth and of good faith, he was sure of commanding special devotion in the land of Dualism. As Prof. Jackson has noted, "the Greek writers regard him as a typical Persian divinity". His cult, reinforced by accretions from Babylonia and Asia Minor, spread over the Roman

Empire. Even before that, Mithra had occupied an equally high position in the age of the later Achaemenids, and under the Parthian Kings, while in the Near East he received adoration as "Apollo Mithras". In this way, the cult of Mithra not only grew in importance in Iran in the course of ages but dominated the Roman Empire, and doubtless carried with it into the West a great mass of Iranian tradition.

Perhaps also the followers of the Iranian religion, which was eventually historical in its outlook, found it necessary to discover some principle, which should be the convincing test of the legitimacy of the successive Aryan dynasties which ruled the land of Iran, and which should, at the same time, *stigmatize decisively as usurpers the dynasties of non-Aryan conquerors*. For we find that the Royal Glory is essentially the Glory of the Aryan race and "belongs to the Aryan nations, born and unborn" (Zamyād Yasht, § 57). Obviously, the Aryans of Irān found it a harder task to maintain their racial existence than the Aryans of India. These Iranians found it difficult to keep up their political integrity against the powerful Semitic kingdoms of Mesopotamia, on one side, and the constant incursions of Turanian nomads on the other. They were therefore anxious to produce some ruler who had "enough Royal Glory to extinguish the non-Aryan people" (Zamyād Yasht, § 68) and to "conquer the hawocking hordes" (*ib.* § 54). In particular, the Royal Glory was believed to "cleave to" (*i. e.* to be the possession of) the eight

princes of the Kavi dynasty which ruled in Eastern Irān and who held at bay the Turanian invaders from the North for a long time. Among these, the greatest guardian of that Glory was Kavi Husravah (Kai Khusrau) to whom it gave power of "extermination of enemies at one stroke" (Zamyād Yasht, §§ 66-77).

Hence, in Irān, the cult of the Royal or Aryan Glory attained a height of dominance and acceptance unequalled in any country. There were no less than three cults devoted directly to the worship of that Glory—those of Mithra, Āstād and Zamyād. The "Aryan Glory" and the "Royal Glory" were held to be almost synonymous, since the Aryan race was alone conceived of as entitled to rule the world. The three cults were further supported by that of Ashi (Vanghui) or that of the god Ashi or Fortune who is made the source of all good and riches. Thus, we find in the Āstād Yasht a description of the Aryan Glory (§§ 1-3) followed immediately by that of Ashi or Fortune (§§ 3-6). Here we have a unique example of the combination of cults of Royal Glory, of Aryan Glory and of Fortune.

For these reasons, among others, the Cult of the Royal Glory failed to develop to the same extent in India as in Irān, although in the Vedas and in the Indian epics most of the essentials of the cult are to be found. Enough, however, has been said to show that these references to the cult in Indian scriptures and epics are of very great importance for the proper interpretation of the legend of the Holy Grail. It

would have been very strange, indeed, had it been otherwise ; for at the bottom of a great deal of the world's mythology lie the ancient Aryan beliefs, which give it a remarkable unity.

SOCIOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE " GRAIL "  
AND THE " HVARENO " (GLORY)

While the ideas of the " Grail " or the " Hvarenō " (Royal Glory) were the highly spiritualized and poetized possessions of many branches of the Aryan race, even some backward races can be shown to be not without similar, though rudimentary, notions. As the possession of the *Hvarenō* is the justification of Royalty in ancient Irān, so in the backward races, the possession of the *Mana* was supposed to account for superior valour, military distinction or wisdom (cf. W. I. Thomas, *Primitive Behaviour*, p. 327). As Prof. W. I. Thomas has put it, there was supposed to be a diffused power of *Mana* scattered through all nature, which can be personalized in a great or wise person. The military leader of the older times—or even a great culture hero—had his supremacy and power justified by the idea that he embodied in himself this *Mana*. That *Mana* he might obtain from some god or spirit, or it might be acquired by, and manifested in, superiority of ritual. Thus in the Avesta the *Hvarenō* or Glory emanates from Mithra and deserts persons who are found wanting in virtue. In the Vedas it was the power of sacrifice and ritual which gained the Earth and Lakshmi for the Devas. In the Legend of the Holy Grail, only

an extraordinary combination of virility and chastity can obtain the Grail.

The *advantages* of the possession of such *Mana* were supposed to be most important and various. *Mana* was exhibited in persons, in power, strength, prestige, reputation, skill, dynamic personality, intelligence; in things, in efficacy, in "luck" *i. e.* in accomplishment (W. I. Thomas, *op. cit.* p. 326). Further, the Priest-King who had the *Mana* could regulate the weather, the harvests and even the fertility of population (Thurnwald, *Die Menschliche Gesellschaft*, Vol. IV, p. 170). We are told similarly in the Zamyād Yasht that the Glory (*Hvarenō*) brings to its possessors good pastures and fine horses, plenty, beauty and weal, power and great strength (§§ 67-69) and that it keeps away hunger and death, cold and heat (§ 69). It need hardly be added that the possessor of Çri or Lakshmi is similarly blessed, according to the ancient Indian traditions, and that the guardian of the Holy Grail was able to give prosperity and plenty to his land. He was in the position of the primitive Divine King, who was responsible for social welfare and was supposed to command the seasons. Further, in the Iranian legends, Mithra is associated with the King as the possessor of the Glory. So, in the regulation of crops and of weather, the Sun is associated with the Priest-King who possessed the *Mana* as also in that of the world order in general (Thurnwald, *op. cit.* p. 170).

From the point of view of *political evolution*,

the notion of *Mana* has a double aspect, and has been of great importance in the transition from the stage of blood-relationship to that of political union. On the one hand, the rise of patriarchs and individual despots was facilitated by the belief in the potency of the *Mana* possessed by an individual or a family. So also, a race or a clan, which believes firmly in its superiority over its neighbours, might justify the belief on the ground of the possession of *Mana* (cf. Thurnwald, *Die Menschliche Gesellschaft*, Vol. IV, pp. 40-41). In this way the foundations of political evolution were laid. Thus A. van Gennep (in his *Tabou et totemisme a Madagascar*, p. 17) brings out the fact that at the basis of the native theory of Kingship lies the idea of *Hasina*, which is the local equivalent of *Mana*. From his coronation to his grave, the King is accompanied by his *Hasina*, which is the fundamental conception of royalty and its power. This reminds us that in the Zamyād Yasht the "Glory" is represented as cleaving to individual Iranian Kings and also as belonging to the Aryan race as a whole.

We may also note that, like the Grail and the Glory, the *Mana* has been manifested in, or attributed to, various inanimate objects. As we have seen above, both the Grail and the Glory have taken the shape of a Cup or a Stone, while the former might also appear as a Lance. The *Mana* has also been attributed among various races to spears and other implements and to weapons like clubs (W. I. Thomas, *op. cit.* p. 328). Codrington has emphasised

the fact that the power or influence designated as *Mana* "may act through the medium of water, or a stone or a bone" (*Melanesians*, p. 118 note). As long ago as the year 1862, Mr. J. F. Campbell had drawn attention to the fact that the sacred basin (the Holy Grail) and the Holy Lance, though Christianised in a later age, are manifestly the same as the Gaelic talismans "which appear so often in the Gaelic tales, and which have relations in all popular lore—the glittering weapon which destroys and the sacred medicinal cup which cures" (cf. Nutt, *Studies in the Legend of the Holy Grail*, p. 103).

Another point of resemblance between the natures of *Mana* and the *Hvarenō* might be indicated here. Thus, among the Iroquoians, *Orenda* is the entity which corresponds to *Mana*; and we are informed by Mr. Hewitt that if a warrior or the player of a game is worsted, then his *Orenda* is supposed to have been thwarted by the greater *Orenda* of his rival (*American Anthropologist*, new ser. IV 38 f). Similarly, in the Shāhnāme, the greater Glory (ج) of Kai Khusrau eclipses and obliterates that of Afrāsiyāb and his son Shideh and, as a result, the two latter are defeated in battle.

These few analogies have been put forward here not as an exhaustive study but merely to show the wide range and prevalence of ideas which, though rudimentary, are still allied to those of the *Hvarenō* (Royal Glory) and the Holy Grail.

## CONCLUSION

The basic idea of some supreme Virtue or great quality—whether possessed by particular individuals or by representatives of the Aryan race—which secured earthly sovereignty as well as spiritual eminence, had developed in antiquity among several branches of the Aryan race. Thus, in the Atharva Veda, there was a great struggle between the Asuras and the Devas for the earth and its treasures, and it was decided in favour of the Devas by their possession of the *Tejas* and through the help of Agni or fire. But the notion of such sovereign Virtue or talisman was developed most in the Iranian tradition as represented by the *Mihir Yasht*, the *Zamyād Yasht* and the *Shāhnāmeh*. The same idea, in a more elementary form, must have appeared among the Greeks (who found no difficulty in identifying the *Hvarenō* with *Tyche*) and among the Kelto-Germanic races. Such elementary ideas would naturally be reinforced in the West by the long domination of Mithraism, which was saturated with Iranian traditions, and by the prevalence of Mithraic mysteries. The notion of the Holy Grail was the resultant of these forces. This is shown by the following general resemblances between the Grail Cult and the Iranian tradition referred to regarding

- (a) the Nature of the Grail and the Glory,
- (b) the virtues attributed to them,
- (c) the “treasures” and “talismans” connected with the Holy Grail, and the Glory,

- (d) the exploits of the heroes who pursued the quest of the Grail and the Glory, as illustrated by the "Vengeance quest", the story of the Fisher-King, the hero's acquisition of the Kingship and the "Great Fool" tale,

We have noted further points of geographical contact between the cults of Mithra and of the Holy Grail, and between the Celtic and Iranian priesthoods.

It might be pointed out, further, that the hypothesis put forward here explains and accounts satisfactorily for such important elements of the Grail Legend as the Perceval *enfances* (pp. 65-68); and the passing of Perceval or Arthur (pp. 75-76); the position and functions of Merlin (pp. 83-84); and the Vengeance Quest (pp. 70-72). No other theory, it is submitted, can account for so many factors in the Grail Legend as the present one. Even the gaps and hiatuses of the present hypothesis are highly significant. It is freely admitted that such features as the "question" and the "processions" are not fully explained by the hypothesis suggested here. But that is obviously because we know very little of the working of the Mithraic ritual and initiation. Perhaps indeed, we shall never be in a position to know more of it, for the work of the destruction of the Mithraea has been done too thoroughly.

It is submitted on these grounds that in great measure it is to this Iranian tradition and to Mithra-

ism that we must look for the full explanation and origins of the Grail cult, and only in a minor degree and subsidiary measure to mysteries like those of Adonis or Eleusis or the cult of Samothracian goddesses. The Folk-lore theory of the Grail is no doubt true in great measure; but it does not conflict with the hypothesis put forward here, because Mithraism may be presumed to have influenced such folk-lore owing to the long and dominant position which the former held in Europe. In any case, it is upto the eminent workers on the Grail *saga* to do justice to the contribution made to it by the Iranian tradition in general and by the cults of the Royal Glory and of Mithra in particular. The Grail student has already gone far afield to all lands which received and cultivated the *Matière de Bretagne*. But he has to go even further and to study the forms which the cult of the Grail or Glory has assumed in older Aryan systems of thought and to the later modifications of these forms. This idea is exemplified by an examination of what corresponds to the quest of the Holy Grail in the Vedas and in the Indian epics; and in these texts also various items of correspondence with the incidents in the Grail legends were pointed out. Thus we found the Devas and the Asuras joining the quest for what combines the ideals of immortality, abundance and empire. We found that the myths about "churning the ocean" threw light on the "Fisher King", and on the "quest" in general, while the myths about Ashi and Lakshmi illustrated the true character of Guinevere.

Thus we found that both Iranian and Indian myths might be used to throw light on the legend of the Grail and that the ideas prevailing in ancient Irān and India on the subject were very similar indeed. This was only to be expected ; for it is the ancient and central mass of Aryan tradition which lies behind, and which imparts such remarkable similarity to the Iranian traditions (in the Shāhnāmeḥ, the Mihir Yasht and the Zamyād Yasht), the allied Indian myths and to the Arthurian legend.

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### III

## THE ROUND TABLE OF KING KAI KHUSRAU

The legend of Kai Khusrau, as transmitted to us by Firdausi and his nameless predecessors, occupies a unique place in the history of the Epic and the Romance. With it began that harmonious grouping of heroes around a central heroic figure, combined with a proper allocation of chivalrous tasks, which is of the essence of the Round Table. As we shall see later, the Kai Khusrau *saga* illustrates and brings into relief the various factors—historical, eschatological and regional—which lead up to the formation of such Round Tables. It also illustrates the peculiar place occupied by the central figure in such Knightly groups, that figure being sometimes outshone by the subordinate heroes and yet possessing qualities which in the long run secure its preponderance. Then, again, with the legend of Kai Khusrau began that putting forward of the “Aryan Expulsion and Return formula” which is exemplified in great historical and epic characters like Cyrus, Alexander and Peredur-Perceval of the Arthurian legend. I have attempted to show, in the Essay on the “Legend of the Holy Grail and its Iranian and Indian analogues”, that the Iranian traditions had much to do with the formation of the Arthurian romance, and that the Kai Khusrau *saga* formed an important part of these Iranian traditions.

One who compares the incidents of the romantic career of Perceval with those of the Kai Khusrau narrative in the Shāhnāmeḥ will have, I submit, few doubts left in the matter. Many ancient influences have contributed to the formation of the Mediaeval romance of Europe in the hands of men like Wolfram von Eschenbach, Chretien de Troyes. The *sagas* of Troy and of Alexander the Great as well as Roman history are known to have been drawn upon and assimilated by the poets of Middle Ages who worked at the Arthurian legend. But we must go further and find out the part played by the Iranian genius—at once, romantic and rational—in the construction of the great romance of the Middle Ages.

None of the great epics, which appeared before the Shāhnāmeḥ, furnish us with a true pattern or model of the Round Table grouped around a true central figure. Not the Iliad, for there Achilles appears in arms only at the beginning and at the end, while his relations to the Greek heroes, who perform many of the exploits, are far from co-operative or friendly. To put it briefly, such other heroes serve only as so many foils for Achilles. Achilles is indeed absent while many of the great deeds in the epic are being performed, and his attitude towards the Achæan side was that of a fairly malevolent neutrality; in fact he would have been happy if the forces of Agamemnon had been smashed properly. Thus, in the ninth book of the Iliad, he declines the prayer of Odysseus to pity the Achæans and asserts that he wishes to see these

Greeks "hemmed in among their ships and given over to slaughter." That is very far from the attitude of the main figure of a Round Table romance. Coming to the *Odyssey*, there again the Round Table is absent, since there is no suitable division of labour—Odysseus himself being the hero of all exploits. As regards the *Rāmāyana*, the central hero is again monopolising exploit and adventure, having only one great co-operator—Hanuman. In the *Mahābhārata*, on the other hand, the central figure is one compounded of three heroes—Yudhishtira, Arjuna and Bhima—each of these coming forward or receding according to occasion.

But in the legend of Kai Khusrau—as in the Arthurian cycle—matters are planned very differently. The central figure in each of these legends is a culture hero with an ethical, sociological and ethnological task before him. In either case, he is to oppose the advance of the pagans or nomadic hordes and to uphold high moral ideals, as well as the cause of civilization. It is this central figure in each case who allocates knightly tasks and generally directs action throughout.

#### COMMON CHARACTERISTICS OF THE KAI KHUSRAU SAGA AND THE EUROPEAN ROMANCES OF THE MIDDLE AGES

It is a most interesting literary task to watch the growth and development of the *saga* of King Kai Khusrau from the *Yashts* to the Pahlavi writers and from these latter to the *Shāhnāmeḥ*. It is like watching the growth of the Arthurian *saga* from old folk-lore and Celtic traditions through the embroidery

by *li conteor* and *li fableor*, whether French or Celtic, as well as by the hands of a long line of poets. These poets worked in a very different atmosphere from the old bards. They wrote for "a society which claimed novelty as well as sentiment, above all the sentiment that gathers round the relations of sex, which gets such free play in the artificial life of courts." Besides these poems, there were prose romances; and, it is to be noted, that Oriental elements were sometimes embodied in these—especially some of the stories about the magician Merlin. Similarly, in Irān, there served as the basis of Firdausi's work not only the Bāstān-nāmeḥ (or Court chronicles) but romances like the Pirān-Wisseh-nāmeḥ and that of Bahram Chobin, besides ballads like the one on which the episode of Bezan and Menijeh is avowedly framed by the poet. These narratives, which in some cases went back to the Avesta, had to be accommodated to the tastes and requirements of the Iranian court of the day, as represented by the court of the Samanide princes and that of Mahmud of Ghazni.

A comparative student of epics will find it interesting to compare how the historical exploits of princes like Kai Khusrau, Charlemagne and Arthur furnish nuclei for the construction of great epics. Thus, it was the wars of Kai Khusrau for uniting Aryan nations and subduing the Turanians that give us the poetic kernel of Iranian epic. So also did the wars of Charlemagne in Italy, Spain and Saxony, and those of Arthur against the Saxon invaders of Britain. If Kai Khusrau

won glory by the stamping out of idolatry around lake Chêchasta, Charlemagne and Arthur were canonized as the champions of Christianity against the pagans, while no one need enlarge on the fame of Arthur as "a fairy king". All three monarchs had their round tables. That of Kai Khusrâu includes numerous heroes drawn from Parthian and Sagistan *sagas*. Charlemagne had his twelve peers at whose head stood Roland and Oliver, and so had Arthur his table adorned by Lancelot, Gawain, Parsifal and others. It is a curious aspect of all these Round Table poems that very often, as Prof. Brandin has remarked, the *exploits of the head* "pale beside those of his chief warriors." Thus Kai Khusrâu is excelled in arms by both Rustam and Gudarz in the Iranian epic (though not in the Avesta texts). Another generalisation which can be made about these Round Tables is that the leader is "credited with equal readiness with the weakness of his successors or the merits of his predecessors." Thus in the Shâhnâmeh the exploits of Parthian and Sakaeen heroes are supposed to have been performed under the auspices of Kai Khusrâu ; while Kai Kaus has to undergo the condemnation which was to be meted out with justice to his Achaemenian successor Cambyses. A third factor, which raises higher the interest of all these epics, consists of *occasional misfortunes and reverses* of some of the heroes of the Round Tables. Thus, at the battles of Lâdan and Hamawân, the hero Gudarz suffers the loss of most of his numerous progeny, while his confrères Tûs and Fariburz are dis-

graced owing to their operations having miscarried. These partial reverses afford Firdausi an opportunity of varying his theme of the constant success of the Iranian side, and enables him to give scope to the tragic aspect of his poetic genius. So the defeat of Roncesvalles, which was a minor affair historically, was celebrated and given world fame by the great poetic skill of an eminent hand. If the hypothesis is true that Arthur "was betrayed by his wife and a near kinsman and fell in battle," we have a deeply tragic side to the Arthurian legend. When we come to the Iranian legend of Kai Khusrau, we see that it approaches the British legend in pathos, by dwelling on the renunciation of royalty by that monarch and on the fidelity of most of his heroes in perishing while emulating their great chief's ascent to heaven.

Finally, some at least of these great Kings show *posthumous activity* and Charlemagne "rose from the dead to take part in the crusades"; while, according to the general belief of Zoroastrian Persia, Kai Khusrau is to return to the scene of his activities at a much later date to take part in the great task of Resurrection. Giraldus Cambrensis speaks of current fables to the effect that Arthur had been "carried far away by spiritual agency and was not liable to death" (Chambers, *Arthur of Britain*, p. 112). Other accounts, too, say that Arthur is undying and his abode is the Other World or the Hollow Hill. As Charlemagne is resting in Odenberg, so Kai Khusrau is resting until the renovation of the world. Occasionally,

the Iranian King is reported to have been "seen" by some lonely wayfarer just like his European confrères.

Other analogies may be pointed out between the European legends referred to above and that of Kai Khusrau. Thus, Arthur sometimes bears the character of a 'culture hero' and sometimes represents a Brythonis divinity. Kai Khusrau, too, is something much more than a man, because he enjoyed the companionship of the good angel Vāe, and because his mysterious disappearance is represented as proof that he "was made to pass away by Vāe the long-continuing lord" (*Dādistan-i Dinik*, Chap. 36, § 3). We read also that Kai Khusrau rode on the back of Vāe "the long-continuing lord who had smitten so many of the ancients who have been the highest of mankind." This Vāe was for the time changed into the shape of a camel, apparently as the Turānian foe had to be pursued across the steppes. Riding this supernatural steed and accompanied by "the Iranian levies, he passed places where the immortals of Irān lay" awaiting the day of doom (*Dinkard*, Book IX, Chap. 23, § 2). Again, he was both a super-man and a "culture hero" in opposing and overcoming Afrāsiyāb, who is represented in the *Zamyād Yasht* as the greatest opponent of the Aryan race and one whose efforts to wrest the glory of that race for himself lasted over long ages.

We might indulge in some more parallels between Kai Khusrau and Arthur. Countries so remote from each other as Scotland and Ireland, Wales and Brittany, have their versions of the Arthu-

rian legend (Chambers, *op. cit.* 123, 193, 196) and echoes of it are to be found as far off as Sicily (*ib.* 221). Similarly, in the case of the Iranian hero, even lands like Seistan, which were outside the ordinary national pale, have come forward to fit their legends into the framework of the *saga* of Kai Khusrau. But, above all, the position of the two kings, with reference to the nations whom they championed, is strikingly similar. Thus, the historical Arthur united the Britons against the pagan invaders and won many victories over them. His work did not however endure, since the Saxons won at last. In Iranian history, too, Kai Khusrau was the last of his line and although we hear of his son Akhrur in the Avesta (cf. Llachea son of Arthur), he did not rule after his father, for a new dynasty was installed. While he lived, however, Kai Khusrau was, as the Yashts put it, "he who united the Aryans into one kingdom".

On one point alone do the fortunes of Kai Khusrau differ materially from those of Arthur. By the end of his career, Arthur sees his Round Table broken up and his faith in his Knights destroyed, since those "militant ascetics" had fallen far short of their ideal. Far different was the spirit of Kai Khusrau's knights, whose attachment to their sovereign was higher at the end than at the beginning, and who sealed their loyalty by "passing away" with their King in spite of repeated warnings.

#### DEVELOPMENT OF THE LEGEND OF KAI KHUSRAU

While, in the case of King Kaus, we have an

accumulation of more and more unfavourable features with the development of his *saga*, as regards Kai Khusrau we are watching an exactly opposite process ; and both these processes are most interesting to the student of comparative legends and epics. In the Avesta, Kai Khusrau is a mighty figure, but we are not favoured with very much information about him. In the *Ābān Yasht* (§ 49), he is distinguished as the one who "united the Aryan nations into one kingdom". His bravery is noted, and he is described as leading in front of his chariots a fierce pursuit of the retiring foe (who may be *Afrāsiyāb* or *Karsivaz*) through the White Forest. Earlier in the day, that Turanian foe had "fiercely striven against King Khusrau on horseback" (§ 50). Most likely, the foe retreating before him, who is characterised as the "murderer", was *Afrāsiyāb* himself, since in § 64 of the same *Yasht* he is described as "the Turanian murderer." At the end of the long and stern chase through the White Forest, the retreat of this foe was cut off and "the lord Kavi Husravah prevailed over them all; he put in bonds *Frangrasyān* and *Keresvazda* to avenge the murder of his father *Syāvarshāna* and of *Aghraeratha*" (*Yasht* XIX, § 77). Incidentally, Kai Khusrau and his Aryans smote also another enemy, "*Aurvasāra*, the lord of the country" (*Rām Yasht*, § 31). This King *Aurvasāra* is not known to *Firdausi*. According to another *Yasht*, *Haoma* was useful to Kai Khusrau in terminating the career of *Afrāsiyāb*, for it was he who dragged the latter bound and fettered

to the Iranian King (Gosh Yasht, § 18). Yasht XXIII adds that Kai Khusrau was "freed from sickness and death".

Such is the somewhat meagre information supplied to us in the Avesta about Kai Khusrau; though even here his apotheosis is unmistakable and he is treated as an immortal. He is also the first prince, who united the Aryan nations and led them to pursue to death Afrāsiyāb, their hereditary and relentless foe. He also earns the reputation of terminating the greatest, bitterest and longest vendetta known to Iranian history.

The Pahlavi texts add little to our historical information about Kai Khusrau, but they certainly enlarge on his spiritual powers and greatness. The *Dādistān-i Dinik* designates him as "an eminent doer" (S. B. E. Vol. XVIII, p. 90); while, according to the *Dinkard*, he was the ruler of all Khvaniras (S. B. E. XXXVII, p. 28). He was a great opponent of idolatry and destroyed the idol-temples that were on the lake of Chēchast (*Mainog-i Khirad*, XXVII, 59), established famous fire-temples and "managed Kangdez". As one who advanced the true faith, this "Eighth Kayān" is regarded as one of the immortals (S. B. E. XXXVII, pp. 203-4). He was also a particular favourite of the angel Vāe, through whom he enjoyed wonderful spiritual flights while alive, visited immortals (*ib.* pp. 224-5), and through whom he at last ascended to heaven. Even before his birth, his soul was shaping history after a fashion. For, when his grandfather, Kai Kaus, was attempting a presumptuous flight in the firmament

and the angel Neryosang was preparing to smite him, the spirit of the unborn Kai Khusrau pleaded for his life, arguing that, should Kaus be slain, there would be no Siyāwash and no Kai Khusrau to smite the Turanians (*Dinkard*, Book IX, Chap. 22, s. 10). Firdausi translates this appeal in his epic thus :

گر از یال کاوس خون آمدی      ز تخمش سیاوش چون آمدی  
چو کیخسرو از پاک مادر تراد      که لهراسپ را تاج شاهی نهاد

Thus, the main contribution of the Pahlavi writers has been to endow Kai Khusrau with a religious and miraculous character, which has ever since marked him out amongst the rulers of Irān, and which is shared by Feridun alone.

By the time we reach Tabari and other chroniclers, the Parthian *saga* had entered the epic to enrich the meagre historical narrations found in Avesta and Pahlavi. Thus, Gudarz and his family (Giw and Bezan) have become the main supporters of Kai Khusrau. With this *saga* came also the glorification of the house of Gotarzes at the expense of Vardanes (Farud), Fariburz and Tūs (Kāren). It is the son of Gudarz who brings Kai Khusrau to Irān, while the failures of Fariburz and Tūs are ultimately redeemed by Gudarz. When Kai Khusrau sends out four armies to invade Turan, it is that of Gudarz which is strongest and it is Gudarz who defeats Pirān and captures Gersiwaz. It is Gudarz, too, who is ultimately promoted from the grade of general to that of Vizier; and in the end the principalities of Ispahan, Gurgan and Kohistan are

bestowed on him. Little is left for Kai Khusrau to do in the war except to win a single combat with Shideh, son of Afrāsiyāb, and to take up the pursuit of the Turanian King himself (Zotenberg, *Chronique de Tabari*, I, 467-473). Even in the matter of the single combat with Shideh, Kai Khusrau is represented as being afraid of the magical powers of the Turanian prince, to start with (Zotenberg, I, 472). The chroniclers do not thus give us a very exalted idea of Kai Khusrau as a warrior. But they (or rather the collectors of traditions and ballad writers on whom they rely) make amends for it by starting the idea of the Round Table of the King composed of Parthian Kings and princes whose original historical epoch was forgotten. The largest share and main places at the Table were filled by Gudarz (Gotarzes) and his descendants, as was indeed the due of the royal line of Parthia. But the Parthian house of Kāren was also represented by the warrior Tūs, their supposed ancestor; while the house of Mihrān was represented by the warriors Gurgin and Milād. Although from the point of view of history this Round Table was a great anachronism, as mixing up Parthian history with that of the Kayani dynasty which preceded the Parthian by many centuries, yet the process greatly increased the poetic dignity of Kai Khusrau by surrounding him with a great number of the most eminent paladins. And, what was more, some at least of these paladins were immortals, according to Pahlavi account. Thus Tūs and Vevān, *i.e.* (the family of Giw) are mentioned in

Pahlavi writings as allies who are going to work together for Resurrection.

When we reach the age of Firdausi, the task of writing the history and romance of Kai Khusrāu becomes far more difficult ; since, in the age and in the province in which the bard of Tūs wrote, account had to be taken of a fully developed *Sagistan saga* with Rustam as its leading figure. This impingement of the *Sagistan saga* vastly enlarged the canvas on which Firdausi had to paint ; for instance, it introduced the wars between the Sakas and the Kushans, which belonged to the first and second centuries of the Christian era, into the Kai Khusrāu epic. It also altered the perspective of the Round Table of Kai Khusrāu, since a leading seat had to be found in it for the great hero of Sagistan. Firdausi managed this most complicated task with masterly skill and resource. Rustam was figured as a super-man or super-hero, whose services are requisitioned only when other heroes are found unequal to some great task. In this way, any clash between the Parthian *saga* and the *Sagistan saga* is avoided. Gotarzes is assured of the kudos given to him by the chroniclers of his house and of his superiority over rival heroes like Fariburz and Tūs. It is only when a great Kushan and Turkish confederation threatens to be beyond the power of even Gudarz, that Rustam is called upon to deal with the situation. Thus, by a suitable and skilful stratification of episodes, the Parthian and Sakaean *sagas* are utilised, and are yet kept apart. This skilful alterna-

tion, inter-relation and arrangement of his episodes constitutes a great merit of Firdausi, which we are apt to overlook or minimise.

#### COMMON FACTORS IN THE FORMATION OF ROUND TABLES

One important reason why so many Parthian heroes and kings were transferred to the Court of King Kai Khusrau in the epic was no doubt the fact that the skeleton of the epic was built up at the Sassanide Court; and at that Court the "Parthians and their times and deeds were regarded with no love or veneration but rather with hatred." At the same time, the deeds of Parthian Kings were being sung all over northern Irān, at least by minstrels in ballads and *contes*. (1) What was more natural than to transfer these Parthian princes into so many knights of the Court of the half-legendary Emperor Kai Khusrau? The otherwise empty Court of that Emperor would thereby be filled; the Sassanian aversion to Parthian princes would be got over; and even Parthian pride would not be hurt if the princes were made paladins at the Court of such a great legendary figure—and paladins whose exploits often were represented as greater than that of their liege lord. This procedure was the easier, since Khusrau was also the name of several Parthian Kings, and, with unwritten history, the *entourage* of the Parthian Kings of that name might be ascribed to Kai Khusrau of remote antiquity. It was indeed very necessary thus to fill the Court of Kai Khusrau since the Avesta mentions no paladin of his.

Now this procedure is paralleled in the Arthurian

legend for when Geoffrey of Monmouth "wants to make up a full court for Arthur at Caerleon" he draws freely on the Welsh genealogies of the tenth century (Chambers, *op. cit.* p. 89).

(2) There is another very important reason why the idea of a Round Table of heroes of equal valour should have originated in old Irān. That reason was *the unquestioned primacy of Irān as regards the lore of Eschatology*. We know that there are many factors which have gone to form the Round Table of Kings like Arthur or Charlemagne. An important one amongst these factors is the provision of a set of heroes who will produce the Renovation of the universe. In the case of Arthur and Charlemagne, the idea of their keeping ready for their functions in the millennium is, as it were, lying in the background. But in the case of Kai Khusrau, the idea is expressly and repeatedly put forward. Thus, the *Dādistan-i Dinik* lays down authoritatively that several heroes are required in the task of producing the renovation of the Universe. Amongst these are not only King Kai Khusrau, but also Tūs and Vevān—two of the foremost and leading heroes of his court, who are to the fore in the *Shāhnāme*h. This Vevān is identifiable with the hero Giw in the *Shāhnāme*h—the latter form of the name being Pazend (*Dādistan-i Dinik*, Chap. 36, s. 3; S. B. E. XVIII, 78; and *Bundehesh*, Chap. 29, s. 6). *It is this notion that probably forms the origin of the idea of the Round Table*; for there can be nothing but equality between heroes co-operating in the great

task of the renovation of the world. "No food-giving significance appear to be attached to the Round Table. The origin and purport of this has been much debated. It seems to have come late into the Arthurian picture. Geoffrey has nothing of it" (E. K. Chambers, *Arthur of Britain*, pp. 216-217). One suggestion for the origin of the idea of the Round Table is that it was meant to avoid brawls for precedence. A better suggestion is that it was fashioned on the model of that of Charlemagne, which itself was modelled on the twelve seats with a thirteenth one in the middle in the Last Supper. I would emphasise the value of this *eschatological notion of the origin of the idea of all Round Tables*. For as Tūs and Giw and other heroes gave their lives in following Kai Khusrau in his disappearance, so they will all rise to help him in the last days. Similarly in the case of Charlemagne, when he will appear again for the Armageddon, he will be accompanied by his paladins

" the dead who deathless all  
fell on the field of Roncesvalles."

The eschatological element is equally strong in Arthur's group ; for he too is seen riding out with his Knights. "Foresters had told of companies of Knights met hunting beneath the full moon, with hounds and a din of horns ; and these, when questioned, declared themselves to be of Arthur's household. Moreover, the Britons long awaited that King's return and we are told that many Britons would get very angry if any one doubted the return of Arthur."

In this connection, we have to note what Mr. E. Anwyl has termed "the undoubted feature of the connection of Arthur and his men with the Other World in the Welsh tradition." Thus, the name Gwenhwyfar (Guinevere) means "the white spectre"; while the loves of some of Arthur's Knights with the ladies of the Other World (*Anfwn*) have given rise to congenial plots.

(3) There is a third factor in the formation of such a Round Table, *viz. provincial patriotism*. The bards of particular provinces saw to it that in the formation of such a table their local or regional hero was not kept out. Thus in the *Dādistan-i Dinik* (Chap. 36, s. 3), where the first miniature Round Table is projected, Rustam is not mentioned and his place as a representative of the province of Seistan was once held by Kereshāsp, the Sāmān. But as centuries rolled on, Rustam became the popular idol of Seistan—very likely on account of his successes in the Kushan Wars. Hence, he had to be included in the Round Table of Kai Khusrāu and, indeed, as the premier Knight. On the other hand, some of the regional heroes mentioned in the Pahlavi works drop out. Thus of the "seven immortal rulers of Khvāniras" (cf. *Dādistan-i Dinik*, Chap. 90, s. 3) Ashavazd, who is famed in Armenian history, dropped out—possibly when Armenia ceased to be a Zoroastrian province. Yoishta, son of Fryan, and Peshyotanu, who were sacerdotal heroes in many respects, lost their importance when Irān ceased to follow the old

religion ; though Peshyotanu appears in the Shāhnāmeḥ if not as a leading champion, yet as an adviser of the impetuous Isfandiyar. Among the heroes of the Shāhnāmeḥ, while Rustam represents Seistan, Tūs stands for Khurasan, Gudarz represents Isfahan and Hyrcania, while the names of Bezan and Gurgin are connected historically with Armenia and Georgia. This is made clear by Firdausi, who makes Kai Khusrau divide his country on feudal lines amongst these and other heroes. In the same way in the Arthur Cycle, various Celtic countries hastened to add their quota of paladins and Knights.

(4) There is still another factor in the formation of the Round Table, whether in ancient Irān or Britain. In the Zamyād Yasht and elsewhere, Afrāsiyāb and his *entourage* are made to represent centuries of Turanian invaders. As Geiger has well observed, "all the oppressions and injuries which the settlements of the Avesta people had to endure from their turbulent neighbours of the Caspian deserts are personified in the Turanian prince Frangrasyān, who, after protracted and desperate struggles, was finally overpowered by Kai Khusrau" (*Civilisation of the Eastern Iranians*, Vol. I, p. 32). But the formation of a focus of noted Turanian leaders led to the formation of a similar focus of the champions of Irān around Kai Khusrau, even though violence was done to the claims of chronology. Thus, in Yasht V, s. 76, the hero Vistauru is placed long after the age of Kai Khusrau. And yet in the Iranian epic he is put

amongst the knights of Kai Khusrāu under the name of Gustahm.

#### ALLOCATION OF KNIGHTLY TASKS

There is some similarity also as regards the methods of allocation followed in allotting the tasks to the heroes of the Round Tables. Thus, we are told that "to facilitate the romances Arthur acquired the convenient habit of always granting a boon before he knew what it was, and of declining to eat at high feasts until an adventure presented itself." Similarly, in the episode of Bezan and Menijeh, when the Armenians come to the banqueting-hall of Kai Khusrāu to complain of the ravages committed in their country by huge boars, that monarch promises redress and asks whether any of his knights was willing to undertake the exploit; Bezan alone volunteered on that occasion to clear Armenia of these pests. Further, *in the epic of Firdausi, the King Kai Khusrāu attempts, at the start, a systematic assignment of tasks*; but this scheme for a well-developed plot, however wisely formulated by Firdausi, is found inadequate for the vast material at his disposal. In all, at the start and according to the programme, six exploits were offered to the energies of the heroes of the Iranian Round Table. The first two of these—the destruction of the Turanian hero Palāshān and the seizing of the crown of Tazhāv—were undertaken and carried out by Bezan. Another hero, Giw, volunteered for the third exploit—the destruction of Tazhāv. Bezan also undertook the capture of Ispanui, the beautiful wife of Tazhāv. The

fifth exploit—that of the firing of a wooden barrier which the Turanian King had erected with the object of preventing the Iranian advance—went again to Giw. The sixth adventure—that of conveying a challenge to the Turanian King—was sought by Gurgin, son of Milād. The knights from Seistan were also eager to distinguish themselves; and Feramorz sought and obtained the task of seizing the district of Khirgah, which the Turanians had seized during the confusion which accompanied the impolitic government of King Kāwus. On these lines, seven great tasks were distributed amongst the Iranian chivalry—all of them being subsidiary or preliminary to the invasion of Turan.

#### SOME KNIGHTS OF THE IRANIAN ROUND TABLE

In the Iranian epic, as finally composed and shaped by Firdausi, the men of the Round Table are first and foremost feudal chiefs and doughty fighters. For one thing, men had ceased to believe in miracles or in the marvellous. Hence, Firdausi apologizes for introducing a “demon” like Akwān and adds that by ‘demons’ he meant only bad men. The Pahlavi writers had endowed King Kai Khusrau with miraculous powers, inasmuch as he had flights on the good Vāe. But Firdausi in his epic dispenses with these traits. It is to be noted that the poet’s Euhemerism goes pretty far. For when he reads in his sources that the hero Giw was one of the immortals, he explains it away by observing that the immortality referred to Giw’s reputation and fame, and not to his personality. Thus Giw’s father tells him :

بی نام جستی میان دو صف      کنون نام جاویدت آمد بکف

This Giw (Vevān in Pahlavi) is not, like his namesake Gawain of the Arthurian legends, endowed with the faculty of increasing in strength from morn till midday. In a word, he is a sturdy Parthian noble and no solar hero. Nor have we in the *Shāhnāmeh* any knight at Kai Khusrau's Round Table like Kei (Kay) and Bedwyr (Bedivere), who were the moon and lightning in human form. Strangely enough, though, the opposite number of King Kai Khusrau—the Turanian King—is endowed with Kei's faculty of breathing and existing for long periods under water. That circumstance greatly increased the difficulties in the way of capturing and destroying him ultimately.

(a) *Gudarz*

While in the Pahlavi books we know only one Knight of Kai Khusrau—Vevān or Giw—in the *Shāhnāmeh* the place of honour is given to Gudarz. He is indeed depicted as the Knight *sans peur et sans reproche*—wise at the counsel-table, brave in battle, patient amidst undeserved misfortunes. He seems to combine the knightly vigour of a Lancelot with the purity of a Galahad. He is of course a glorified edition of the Parthian King, Gotarzes Geopothros; and the late Dr. Nöldeke was of the opinion that the character given to Gudarz in the epic is highly inconsistent with that of the historical Gotarzes (*Grundriss der Iranische Philologie*, II, 137). But there is room for dissent from this opinion—as I

have shown in my *Cults and Legends of Ancient Iran and China* (pp. 192-3).

As a pattern of feudal virtues, Gotarzes was difficult to surpass. Thus he gloried in being the right hand man of his King Artabanus III and inscribes himself on the sculpture as "Kalymenos of Artabanus," whom he ultimately succeeded. That reminds us that in the Shāhnāmeḥ, King Kai Khusrau made Gudarz the general legatee of his treasures:

چو بکشاد آن گنج آباد را      وصی کرد گودرز کشواد را

Probably this appointment of Gudarz as legatee of King Kai Khusrau in the epic represents the claim of Gotarzes to be the "Kalymenos" of King Artabanus III. No one questions his loyalty to his King nor the vigour with which he encountered and defeated the Roman candidate for the Parthian throne. He was generous enough, too, to spare the life of that rival. His chivalrous character is also shown by the fact that he went out of his way to warn Vardanes—his other rival—of a conspiracy against the life of the latter. In any case, the popularity of King Gotarzes must have been phenomenal with the later generations of the Parthians. For only such popularity can explain the encomiums heaped upon him in the work of Tabari and the prominent role assigned to him in the Shāhnāmeḥ; and this latter in spite of the impact of the Sakaeen saga on the Iranian epic, which brought Rustam to the fore as the greatest of champions.

(b) *Giw.*

It is very likely that Gotarzes (Geopothros) helped in the restoration of King Artabanus III to the throne after that monarch's exile to Turan. But in the *Shāhnāmeh*, the similar exploit of bringing back Kai Khusrāu from Turan is transferred to the credit of Giw, son of Gudarz, and it forms indeed the culmination of the son's heroic life. Firdausi is true to the general tendencies of human life in depicting Giw as rash and adventurous in his youth, energetic but cold in his manhood, and very cautious in his old age. Thus, when we meet him first in the epic, he is seen urging Rustam to undertake one of the most daring of his adventures—that of openly defying Afrāsiyāb by taking back pleasure in his King's hunting ground. In his manhood, however, he makes his name by the seven years' quest for prince Kai Khusrāu, the son of Turan. This was indeed one of the most daring and noteworthy exploits of the Iranian Round Table. Another of his exploits was the firing of the timber barrier placed on the river Kāsē Rūd by Afrāsiyāb to prevent the advance of Iranians—that barrier being so large that it burned continuously for three weeks. At Lādan (or Poshan) Giw, though always wary and watchful, is unable to save the day, though he kills Tazhāv later in revenge for his young brother Bahram. In burning the wooden barrier, Giw gallantly performed the task assigned to him by his King, remarking the while that he was not yet too old for warlike exploits. But later he shows a curiously

pacific and cautious side of his character, leading an embassy for accommodation with the Turanians and strongly warning his only son Bezan against seeking a single combat with the redoubtable Homān. Perhaps it was Firdausi's own love for his only—if unworthy—son that inspired this unwonted display of tenderness on the part of Giw. At any rate his great paternal affection for Bezan makes him stand out in a dramatic scene on this subject against both Bezan and Gudarz who were eager for the combat :

مراہوش و جان جهان این یکیت      بچشم چنین جان او خوار نیست  
نخواہش کردن ز چشم جدا      فرستادن اندر دم ازدا

Commentators on the Arthurian legends have been puzzled by the idea to be found in Wolfram von Eschenbach that the hero Gawain had "a sword of magic properties" which "will accomplish all required of at one blow, a second will undo the work." If broken, it could be welded by plunging it into the water of a certain spring (J. L. Weston, *Legend of Sir Perceval*, p. 148). Now, as has been suggested above, water is representative of the Royal Glory which can work any miracle even of welding. We find in the Iranian epic, too, that the hero Giw, during his seven years' quest for Kai Khusrau, uses his sword to cut down at one blow those who failed to answer his queries regarding the whereabouts of his prince. One more analogy of Giw to Gawain might be recorded here. As we read in the *Merlin*, Gawain is specially the "queen's knight" and rescued Guinevere. In the

Iranian epic, too, it is *Giw* who brings back queen Firangis from Turan in safety. Moreover, Gawain's expedition to the 'Other-World' has its counterpart in Giw's seven years' sojourn in the land of Turan (J. L. Weston, *Legend of Sir Gawain* pp. 74-75). Again, in the *Shāhnāmah* the hero Giw also acquires the armour of Siyāwash, which is of so wonderful a nature that neither water nor fire could produce any effect on it :

چو افتاد بر خواسته چشم کیو      کزین کرد درع سیاوش نیو  
نگردد چنین آهن از آب تر      نه آتش بر او بود کار گر

That armour was later much in request and was worn by Bezan, son of Giw, in the combat with Homān.

(c) *Bezan*

It is when we come to the hero Bezan, that we encounter the Roland of the Iranian chivalry. It is not surprising that a modern scholar has selected him from the circle of Kai Khusrau to compare him with Parzival (Z. D. M. G. 1928, p. lxiii). Perhaps it would be a better suggestion that it was the Parthian ballads about Gotarzes, Giw and Bezan, which formed the basis of one of the earliest legends of chivalry in Mediaeval Europe, *viz.*, those relating to Gawain. The name Gawain would cover all three, for Gotarzes called himself Geopothros (*i. e.* son of Giw or Viv) while the name of Bezan also signifies "the son of Giw" (Vivzan). That their exploits were long sung by the bards of old Parthia we know,

for Firdausi avowedly introduces one of them—that of Bezan and Menijeh—in his epic. It is just of the sort which would appeal to mediaeval audiences, which thirsted for tales of love, sentiment and adventure especially of aristocratic life. Such were the stories of the three Iranian heroes and also that of Gawain who “was probably the centre of a cycle of traditional stories as old, if not older than anything fabled or sung of Arthur” (Jones, *King Arthur in History and Legend*, p. 110). It was Gawain who was originally the hero of the Grail quest, though supplanted later by Perceval. Hence, if an attempt is to be made to connect Iranian epic legends with the Grail legends, it must be through Gawain and not through Parzival as has been tried by Dr. Suhtschek of Grätz. It is obvious that the story like that of Bezan and Menijeh could have been incorporated in the Arthurian cycle—with a suitable change of proper names—and no one would suspect that it was a foreign importation.

But to return to Bezan’s exploits—they are only next in importance to those of Rustam. To him is accorded in the epic the honour of overcoming Homān—the most formidable of Turanian heroes and one whose insolent challenge to the Iranian army even Gudarz is afraid to take up. The self-glorification of the Turanian champion is splendidly described by Firdausi—as the former takes his stand on a hill, waves his lance around his head and shames Gudarz and his Iranians by his insolent words of defiance:

بیلا بر آمد بکردار مست      خروش همی آوه را کرد یست  
 همی نیزه بر کاشت بر کرد سر      که هومر و یسه است بیروزگر  
 چو هومر بر آمد بر ن چیری      پیچید گمادوز ازان خبرگی  
 سپید ازان شره گشته دژ      گرفته بر او خشم و اند ستم

It was then that Bezan saved the honour of the Iranian army by accepting the challenge of Homān and overcoming him. Nor was that his only outstanding exploit: for when Nestihān—the brother of Homān—made a light attack on the Iranian host and is about to succeed, it is an arrow from Bezan's strong hand that kills his horse and a blow from Bezan's arm that ends the career of the Turanian warrior.

یکي بر بر اسپ استیهند      رسیه از شداده بر بیژن  
 عمودی زد کان سر تریه وار      نهی ماند ز معز و بر پشت گور

In this way, Bezan avenges his brother Bahrām who had fallen in battle with Pirān and his family. It is Bezan, again, who saves Gustahān, who had been very severely wounded, during the pursuit of the last two of the line of Viseh. Nor is Bezan known only for his adventures in war. For it is he who secures the love of the daughter of Afrāsiyāb, defies the Turanian King in his own capital and finally is rescued by Rustam from the dreadful prison in which he had been cast. Finally, he along with Giw seals his loyalty by accompanying Kai Khusrau in his famous journey to the other world. We have men-

tioned elsewhere how he destroyed the Turanian hero Palāshān at the very beginning of the wars of Kai Khusrau.

Bezan is also the only knight of Kai Khusrau, who distinguishes himself as much by his love affairs with the Turanian ladies as by his encounters with Turanian heroes. He pursues Tazhāv with such impetuosity that the latter is compelled to abandon his beautiful wife, Ispanui. With great gallantry and grace, Bezan then induces Ispanui to ride to the Iranian camp on his own horse behind himself :

رسید اندر آنجای بیژن فراز      گرنتش مران خو برخ را بناز  
پس پشت خویش اندرش جای کرد      سوی لشکر بهلوان رای کرد

(d) *Tūs and Gustahm*

While Gudarz and his family secure most of the honours in the epic, some old Iranian heroes lost much of their importance by their inclusion in the *entourage* of Kai Khusrau. Thus in the *Dādistān-i Dīnik* (Chap. 36, s. 3) Tūs and Vevān (Giw) are considered as *allies*, while in *Ābān Yasht*, §§ 53-58, the exploits of Tūs in overcoming "the gallant sons of Vaesaka" are praised highly. In that *Yasht*, too, he is distinguished as "valiant" and as a smiter of the Turanian people in "their tens of thousands and their myriads of myriads." Again it is he who "overcomes the gallant sons of Vaesaka" (i. e. *Pirān and Homān*). He is the chief of the swift-horsed Naotaras, who were the great rivals of Turanians as a body of cavalry (*Ashi Yasht*, § 56).

Yet, in the epic, this mighty hero of the Avesta is depicted as extremely rash and choleric and a complete failure as commander-in-chief, having lost two campaigns in which he commanded. Thus Kai Khusrau, when dismissing Tūs and appointing his rival Gudarz as his successor, advises the former not to be wild and restless like Tūs :

نگر نه نجوشي بکردار ضوس نه بندی بهرکار بر ییل کوس

He added that it was Tūs who had been the evil genius of King Kāwus ; that Tūs was a man of dull soul and devoid of virtues, and that he was not executed only because he was old and a descendent of King Minuchehr. Nevertheless he was to be kept a prisoner in his house. He was alleged to be sleepy during warlike operations and active only at drinking bouts :

اگریش ازین 'وسیهبد است	بکوس شاد اختر بد بد است
برزم اندرون نر خواب آیدش	چو بامی نشیند شتاب آیدش
هنرها همه نیست نزدیک اوی	مبادا چنین جان تاریک اوی
نژاد منوچهر و ریش سپید	ترا داد بر زندگانی امید
وگر نه بفرمودی تا سرت	بد اندیش کردی جدا از برت
برو جاودان خانه زندان تست	همان گوهر بد نکهبان تست

Moreover, the exploits which were attributed to Tūs in the Yashts are ascribed in the epic to Gudarz and his descendents. Thus, in the epic, it is not Tūs who overcomes Pirān and Homān ; for in the Shāh-nāmeḥ it is Gudarz who slays Pirān, while his grand-

son Bezan overcomes Homān. The whole victorious vendetta between Tūs and the family of Pirān is transferred to the credit of the house of Gudarz. The fact is that the *Naotara saga of which we find traces in the Yashts has been distorted*, diverted and incorporated, after a fashion, in the accounts which glorify the house of Gudarz or Gotarzes. It is very curious that Firdausi should not have redressed the balance in favour of the eponymous hero of his own noble city and birth-place. The distortion above referred to is supposed to have been due to the rivalry of two great houses in the *Grundriss* (II, 137). But this explanation is inadequate; since the house of Naotara flourished before the days of Gushtāsp, while the house of Gotarzes flourished only during the first century of the Christian era. A better supposition would be that the bards who glorified the house of Gotarzes transferred bodily most of the exploits of the ancient Naotaras to their own patrons. Even so, it is not clear why these bards went further and tried to tarnish the glory and ruin the good name of the Naotarid hero. As it is, Tūs with his confidence in his cavalry, his rashness and his neglect of good advice resembles very much the warrior Asius as depicted in the Iliad.

“Asius alone confiding in his car

His valiant coursers urged to meet the war

Unhappy hero and advised in vain.”

(Book XII, 125-130).

It is worth noting that while in the Ābān

Yasht the warrior Tūs is described as having lived sometime after the King Kai Khusrau, in the *Dinkard* (Book IX, Chapter 23, § 2). Tūs is supposed to have lived and died before that King's age. For Kai Khusrau in his flight on the Wind (Vae) with his "Iranian levies" comes to the place where "Tūs the banisher of strife, lay in strength" and let him lie there. Later on, during the same adventure, the King came to the place where one of his own ancestors "Kai Apiveh lies and let him also lie." Here is an instance of how heroes of a Round Table are gathered together in epics regardless of the claims of chronology.

Another Naotarid hero—Gustahm (in the Avesta Vistara)—has also been despoiled of his honours to add to the glory of the house of Gotarzes. In the Farvardin Yasht "Vistara son of Naotar" is placed high amongst warriors (§ 102). Again in Ābān Yasht (§§ 76-79), he is said to have smitten as many worshippers of the Dævas as the hairs on his head; hence, a miracle was wrought in his favour, for he was left a dry passage to pass over the river Vitan-ghuhaiti. In the epic *this miracle is again distorted* and made of little value to the hero. It is narrated, that while pursuing Turanians across a river, Gustahm was badly wounded and was about to die. He was rescued by one of the family of Gudarz (Bezan) and transported on horseback across the river. After that his life was saved by the application of the famous amulet of Kai Khusrau.

Thus, even the miracle in his favour is reduced to

futility, as indeed might have been expected. Both Tūs and Gustahm are kept out of the decisive "combat of eleven heroes." And though Gustahm is often mentioned in the epic, the sole exploit attributed to him is the pursuit of Lahāk and Farshidvard—the sons of Pirān—after the great battle itself had been won by the Gudarz clan. Even so, this pursuit is considered to be too great a task for him. Hence, Bezan is sent to rescue him from the dangers of the pursuit and is made to save him from death. Truly these are pretty poor achievements to be ascribed to one for whom the Avesta claimed the honour of having "slain as many followers of demons as the hairs on his head." But here again we can trace the influence of the bards who strove to glorify the house of Gudarz or Gotarzes at the expense of more ancient heroes.

(e) *Rustam*

We now come to the last and the greatest of these heroes—Rustam. In the treatment of that matchless warrior by Firdausi, we do not know which to admire most—the treatment of particular exploits or the skilful weaving in of these with the general trend of the Iranian epic. Firdausi is conscious of his own skill there and tells us so; for, as he says, he got the incidents from Āzād Serv but it was he who treated and incorporated them as a bard should:

بگویم سخنها کزو یافتم سخنها يك اندر دگر باقم

In the great epic, Rustam reminds us sometimes

of "solar heroes" like the Babylonian Marduk, the Greek Herakles or the Chinese No-cha—notably in his seven exploits of Mazendaran. At other points, his wrath and its consequences are reminiscent of those of Achilles, *a. g.* when he withstands the power and anger of King Kāns in the episode of Schrab. In the episode of Kāmās, the Kushani, we see how Iranian forces had been out-matched and out-manoœuvred completely and are awaiting in mortal anxiety the arrival of Rustam, which alone can turn the tide of the battle. Firdausi heightens the interest of his epic by matching against Rustam a *triad* of Turanian warriors of superhuman capacity and confidence—Kāmūs, Pilsun and Puladwand. Even after Rustam has overcome them, he has yet to perform the greatest feat of his life—his combat with Isfandiār. It was not so much a combat of two heroes as that of two races and civilizations. Behind Isfandiār is the momentum of all the victories of the Iranian race, of its skill in archery, of its pride in its superior civilization. On the other hand, Rustam stands for the hard fighting qualities, the rude vigour and the simple character as well as loyal mind of the Saka race—a race which had once overrun Parthia and had slain some of its warrior kings. The issue can only be decided by the supernatural agency of the Simurgh. And, similarly, the passing of Rustam is brought about not only by treachery of the deepest die on the part of his own brother, but also to fulfil the oracle that he who slew Isfandiār had not long to live.

The contrast is great between the Rustam, we read of in the pages of Tabari, and the same hero in the Shāhnāmeḥ. In Tabari he is certainly mentioned as the first of Iranian heroes, triumphing in both West and East—in Yemen and in Turan. But in that chronicle, Gudarz closely approaches him in importance. Rustam is as yet without the halo of the great Haftkhwān, nor does he face and overcome supernatural demons. The Seistan *saga* had obviously not had its full impact as yet on the main epic tradition of Irān. That was left to the age of Firdausi, who was influenced both by the oral information of Āzād Serv (or Serv Āzād) and by the local patriotism of the environment in which he composed the Shāhnāmeḥ.

In Arthurian romance, the only hero who has some of the traits of Rustam is Sir Kai supplemented as the latter's exploits are by his *alter ego*—Bedwyr. We can compare the overcoming of the demons of Māzendaran with the slaying of nine witches by Kai (Jones, *op. cit.* 43). As regards "the worthy Kai" we are told that "vain were it to boast in battle against him"—as many of Rustam's opponents also found. Like Rustam, too, Kai "slew as would an hundred—unless it were God's doing, Kai's death would be unachieved." Similarly, Rustam dies only because it was ordained that the slayer of Isfandiār had not long to live. Both Kai and Rustam are mighty figures at the wine-table. For the former's "drinking powers were equal to those of four men;" while no warrior could quaff Rustam's wine-cup—not Bahman nor any

other Iranian champion. Indeed, there was a consensus of opinion in the Round Table to the effect that "no one can quaff Rustam's cup, and that the Devil himself cannot stand that hero in the matter of drinking":

که مارا بدین جام می جی نیست      نمی با تو ابلیس را پای نیست

(f) *Gurgin*

No great legend or romance would be complete without a villain of the piece, or a traitor against the central figure and power. But loyalty to the King on the part of his feudal nobility was such an essential virtue in the eye of the Iranian race that we have no such traitors in its epic as Lancelot and Modred of the Arthurian cycle—the former of whom deprived the King of his queen, while the latter wounded Arthur "nigh to death." Nor do we get anything in the *Shāhnāmah* in the way of treason to the centre and head of the Round Table as we have in the Charlemagne cycle. In the Charlemagne legend, indeed, we meet with the redoubtable figure of Doon de Mayence, who hates Charlemagne on grounds of family and racial bitterness, and challenges the latter to a single combat. That combat actually takes place, and both Charlemagne and Doon keep showering blows on each other until an angel appears on the scene and arranges for an armistice. Indeed, the Charlemagne *saga* is as rich in traitors and rebels as that of Arthur. Besides Doon of Mayence, we have Huon of Bordeaux and his brother whom Charlemagne hates; he marches

against them and swears to hang Huon before he ever touches food again. Here again only supernatural agency saves the vassal from the King's wrath. In the Shāhnāmeḥ, the role of the traitor is filled only by Gurgin, son of Milād (Meherdates), who betrays the hero Bezan and exposes him to the danger of captivity and death. Even so this degradation of Gurgin (in the ballad which Firdausi avowedly incorporates in the epic) is due to that hostility of the house of Gotarzes to that of Meherdates of which we read in Tacitus—especially as Bezan (Vivzan) belongs to the former family. In Tabari, we do not read anything of the treachery or degradation of Gurgin. On the other hand, in that great chronicle, we find Milād honoured one of the four great generals, who co-operated in the operations for encircling the forces of Afrāsiyāb (Zotenberg's *Tabari*, Vol. I, p. 469). Even in the Shāhnāmeḥ, Gurgin repents of his treachery and is pardoned at the instance of the hero Rustam.

There is some historical foundation for at least a portion of this romance of Bezan and the treachery of Gurgin—omitting of course the part taken by Afrāsiyāb and Rustam respectively. Historically, there was a connection between the Parthian families of Mihrān or Meherdates and of Monaises; and a daughter of the house of Monaises would naturally be called by the name of Menijeh. We note that Plutarch mentions a Mithridates, a cousin of Monaises, who gave information to Mark Antony, during his retreat from Parthia which saved the Roman army.

This Monaises was a Parthian nobleman who had been driven into exile by the tyranny of Phraates IV (Justi, *Geschichte des alten Persiens*, p. 152). Thus, both this Mithridates and his cousin Monaises, who went over to Antony, must have been regarded and detested as traitors by the Parthians. And, indeed, according to Plutarch, both were acting in concert and helping the Romans, with the result that "Mithridates was presented with as many phials and cups of gold as he could conceal in his garments". (There was another Monaises, however, in the reign of Vologases I, who earned a better reputation by defeating the famous Roman general Corbulo). Nor is this connection of the houses of Milād and Monaises the only proof of some historical background for the story of Bezan and Menijeh. For both the names—Gurgin (Warkaina) and Meherdates—were very common during the Parthian age, and afterwards, in Armenia and Georgia where the scene of the story of Bezan and Menijeh is laid. And in Armenia there was long shown a pit in Phytakaran called "Bezan-hankani" or the prison of Bezan. The name Bezan was also common in Armenia until our own days (cf. Justi's *Iranisches Namenbuch*).

The position of Gurgin in the *Shāhnāmeh* might be compared to that of the traitor Ganelon in the *Charlemagne saga*. While Gurgin envies the exploits of Bezan and hence makes plans for his ruin, Ganelon believes himself insulted by Roland, who had been the agent in sending the former on an embassy to the

Moorish King of Spain. Consequently, Ganelon so arranges matters that Charlemagne departs from Spain leaving Roland with only a rear-guard which was overwhelmed by the Moors. The judgments passed on Gurgin and on Ganelon may be contrasted with advantage. While Gurgin escaped capital punishment only by the intercession of Rustam, Ganelon was actually executed. True, the Peers of Charlemagne were inclined to the side of mercy. But an appeal was made to the ordeal of battle, and, as the champion of Ganelon suffered defeat, Ganelon was executed.

#### CATALOGUES OF KAI KHUSRAU'S HEROES

Twice the Iranian epic furnishes us with catalogues of the heroes of King Kai Khusrau's Round Table—one at the beginning of his reign when the preliminary tasks had to be allotted to particular warriors, and the second when the final and decisive invasion of Turan begins. These catalogues are of interest to the student of the Iranian Round Table and correspond to the list of warriors in the second book of Iliad :

“ What crowded armies, from what climes,  
they bring,

Their names, their numbers, and their  
chiefs, I sing.”

The *objects of compiling these catalogues* are different in the two epics. In Homer the idea is “to give a detailed political geography of Greece” though

curiously enough the catalogue is not quite consistent whether with other references in the Iliad or with what we know of the Greek settlements in the earliest ages (Chadwick, *The Growth of Literature*, Vol. I, p. 190).

Firdausi has been careful in his enumeration, arrangement and classification of these heroes ; for he or rather his priestly predecessors in his labour are aware that they are describing the military might of one whom old Irūn recognized as "the ruler of the Khvaniras" continent (*Dinkard*, Book VIII, Chap. 13, sec. 14) and the "Iranian levies (*Jangamanoikan*)," who were fit to march under the same banner as the spiritual allies of Kai Khusrāu (*Dinkard*, Book IX, Chap. 23, sec. 2). In the first catalogue of Firdausi, the principle of classification is *by clans* or families, and there are nine such clans with appropriate membership for each. There is an allocation of tasks for which distinguished heroes volunteer ; and, finally, there is a march past with all the pomp and circumstance of war. We note that Rustam excuses himself from joining these—on the plea of old age. This shows that we have the description of a real Iranian expedition which follows some old account, since Rustam was a later importation into the epos. In any case, the catalogue belongs to the Parthian age, as Gudarz becomes the real leader while both Kai Khusrāu and Rustam are kept out. The main exploits are described so as to glorify Gudarz and his family ; and most of the achievements and personages belong to Par-

thian history, as I have attempted to show in my book on the *Cults and Legends of Ancient Iran and China*. The cavaliers are, we have to note, divided into ten groups thus : (1) The warriors belonging to the royal family, (2) The descendants of Minucheher and Nodar led by Tūs, (3) Gudarz and his seventy-eight descendants, (4) The descendants of Gazdehem led by the hero Gustahm, (5) The family of Milād (Meherdates) under the leadership of Gurgin, (6) The tribe of Tawabeh under Barteh, (7) The descendants of Pashang under Rew, (8) Seventy warriors of the line of Barzin led by Farhād (Phraates), (9) The followers of Garāzeh led by himself, and (10) The descendants of Feridun under Ashkash (Arsakes). It is noteworthy that except the first two and the fourth, and perhaps the seventh, all are Parthians, as is shown by the prevalence of Parthian names like Arsakes, Phraates, Meherdates and Gotarzes. The catalogue is obviously of some *value as regards the relative importance of royal and princely families of Parthia*, and deserves close and careful analysis.

The second catalogue is framed on *geographical* lines and attempts to indicate what countries were supposed to have been under the sway of Kai Khusrau and what leaders they contributed to the final effort which was directed by Kai Khusrau in person. The war has entered on the final phase after preliminary tasks had been carried out and only the heart of Afrāsiyāb's empire remains to be pierced. Speaking from the historical point of view, however, *the earlier*

*campaigns had been merely events borrowed from Parthian history to amplify the somewhat thin history of Kai Khusrāu.* With this second great review and gathering of troops, we reach the point where Kai Khusrāu's own exploits begin. In Tabari's great history as well as in the *Shāhnāmeh*, much importance is attached to this gathering which, according to the former, was held near Balsh in a vast plain called *Shan Seram* (سره سراف cf. Zotenberg's *Tabari*, Vol. I, p. 469). Tabari mentions only five great leaders—Gudarz, Fariburz, Gurgin, son of Milād and Zangae Shawarām (misread in Zotenberg as Ais son of Nehrwan) with Rustam in reserve. Tabari also adds a female heroine and leader of Irān—Soumhar—who was very keen on the aim of avenging Siyāwash. On the other hand, as described by Firdausi, this gathering is swollen not only by the other knights of the Round Table but by a great number of kings—the kings of Kabul, of Kermān, of Khuzistān, of Yemen, of Dabistān and the King of the Gharchehs. To these are added warriors from the region of Caucasus (supposed to be descended from Feridun and Jamshid) and—what is more significant—the Parthian hero Ārash (Arsakes), whose feats of archery are mentioned in the *Tir Yasht* and elsewhere in the *Avesta*. These vast masses were intended to, and did, surround the forces of Afrāsiyāb.

We know that the catalogue of heroes in Homer was *manipulated for political purposes* including the fixation of local boundaries. We have no proof that

Firdausi in his catalogue had any such idea. But we may suspect that he took the opportunity of composing the catalogue to pay a compliment to one of his future patrons. For we know that after his quarrel with Sultan Mahmud, Firdausi took refuge with Ispahbed Shahriyār, son of Sharwin, who was a vassal of prince Qābus, son of Washmgir, prince of all Tabaristan. Now in the catalogue, Firdausi shows the great antiquity of the house of Washmgir by representing that the brave Tokhār, prince of Dihistān, was descended from Washmeh "in whose house was royalty in that age":

اباشاه شهر دهستان تخوار      که در چشم او بداندیش خوار  
که از تخمه تاملور وشمه بود      بزرگی بدانکه دران تخمه بود

Thus, at a stroke, Qābus was assured of a royal lineage going back to the age of Kai Khusrau himself. With his uneasy position at the court of Mahmud of Ghazni, Firdausi must have for years contemplated the advantages of resorting to the court of Tabaristan; and might have prepared the way for it by paying this compliment to a future patron.

#### SOME FEMALE CHARACTERS IN THE KAI KHUSRAU SAGA

It might be instructive to compare Queen Guinevere and Morgain La Fee who play such a great part in the Arthurian legends with Queen Sudabeh and "Susan Rāmishgur" of the Iranian epics. It is very necessary indeed to find a place for such ladies in heroic legends, in order to test the virtue as well as the good sense of the heroes. Both the kings—

Arthur and Kai Khusrau—are alike cast in real heroic mould, and are therefore out of the reach of female wiles, even when reinforced by magical practices. But, while Kai Khusrau is always superior to these attractions, Arthur commits a single slip—which, however, proves fatal to him. For he had the misfortune to beget Modred on his own sister “in ignorance of her identity” (Chambers, *op. cit.* p. 159).

It took some time before the tale of the guilty love of Lancelot and Guinevere became the very centre of Arthurian legends. For, to start with, it was the “Story of Perceval and the Grail” which was the head and end of all other stories (Weston, *Quest of the Holy Grail*, pp. 20-22), while Lancelot played but a secondary part. In the end, however the passion of Guinevere for Lancelot became the central theme, since it resulted in the death of Arthur and the disappearance of the Round Table. Similarly Queen Sudabeh and her passion for her step-son Siyāwash, are not mentioned either in the Yashts or in Pahlavi writings. I have suggested, in my *Cults and Legends of Ancient Iran and China*, that the whole episode of Sudabeh, her influence over King Kāwus and her illicit love for prince Siyāwash might have been borrowed from, or lent to, the Chinese romances, which give an exactly similar account of the influence of the evil queen Sutaki over the Emperor Chou-Wang and of her guilty passion for prince Yin-Kiao. Thus, in the *Shāhnāmah* also, the guilty love of a queen brings about the catastrophe, the great war

between Turan and Irān.

Some other Circes and Calypsos are also to be found in the Shāhnāmeḥ besides Sudabeh; but of course she is the great representative of female wile, and under her influence King Kāwus lost his son, his happiness and his kingly popularity. Obviously, it is the function of enchantresses like Circe to turn even heroes into swines. In the Vendidad, we have the Pairika Khnāthaiti, who clung to the hero Keresḥāsp—an episode which might imply a connection for life with some Circe. In the Haftkhwāns of both Rustam and Isfandiār, we find evil fairies attempting to beguile these heroes in the guise of beautiful women bringing with them wine and music. But the most artistic enchantress, ever produced in Iranian literature, is to be found in the person of Susan-i Rāmishgur (or Susan the songstress) in the Barzo-nāmeḥ—an imitation of the Shāhnāmeḥ. She is sent by Afrāsiyāb to secure through her charms the persons of Rustam and other heroes. She actually succeeds by her wiles, assisted by the strength of the Turanian warrior Pilsum, in capturing Giw, Bezan, Gustahm and Tūs, and even much older heroes like Gudarz. It is only when Zāl sends for Rustam and Barzo that the plot is upset. In the Arthurian legend, old Merlin teaches his magic craft to Morgain la Fee and to Niniane (later Vivian) and it is the latter who is the cause of the downfall of Merlin. Morgain la Fee also entraps Lancelot, with the result that there has to be organized a quest for him. In all romances, water is

identified with magic, and, as a result, Merlin's Nini-ane is also designated as the Lady of the Lake. Similarly, not only Susan, the songstress, but the evil fairies, who try their wiles and arts on Rustam and Isfandiār, all appear either from or near streams of water.

We have noted some of the Bruneilds of the Shāhnāmeḥ, and we might now admire the Kriemhilds. This is the more necessary, because it has been remarked by a high authority that the Shāhnāmeḥ is weak and deficient in the matter of the gentler heroines. Need it be emphasised that in Firangis, the Iranian epic possesses a model wife and mother? Her beauty is the least of her merits, and yet of it Firdausi draws a great picture rarely equalled even in Persian literature :

دو رخسار زیبایش مثل قر      دو چشمش ستاره بوقت سحر  
فرشته بخوی و چو عنبر بیوی      بدل مهربان و بجان مهرجوی

She attempts to save the life of Siyāwash, at the risk of her own, by pleading for mercy before Afrāsiyāb at the height of his anger. She shows great tenderness not only towards her son but towards Pirān, whom she rescues from the sword of Giw. Her practical good sense was shown in her advice to her husband, as well as son, to depart from Turān while yet there was time, and thus to avoid the fiendish fury of her own father. In another great scene, Firdausi describes how she cherished the memory of Siyāwash, and how she was smitten with profound grief at the sight of the steed of her dead husband :

فرنگیس چون روی بهزاد دید      شد از آب دیده رخس ناپدید  
دورخ را بیال و برش بر نهاد      روان سیاش همی کرد باد

During her flight towards Irān with Giw and Kai Khusrau, it is she who is constantly on the alert and warns them in time of the imminent pursuit by Afrāsiyāb :

بدیگر کران خفته به کیو و شاه      نشسته فرنگیس بر دیده گام  
دوان شد بر کیو و آ گام کرد      بدان خفتگان خواب کوتاه کرد

In a word Firangis furnishes us with an exemplary portrait of a tender and loyal wife and mother.

The passion of motherhood is portrayed admirably by Firdausi not only in the case of Firangis but in that of *Jerireh* (the mother of prince of Farud). She gave her son excellent advice about co-operating with the Iranian army; but, still, when the Iranian army came on to storm Kelāt—the fort of Farud—she heartened her son for the inevitable fight. Finally, when defeat was inevitable, she burned the fort to the ground with all its treasures to prevent them from falling into the hands of the foe. But, with all her merits, the career of *Jerireh* is one of unrelieved tragedy. For, in spite of her energy of will and intellectual power, she is a victim consecrated from the first, losing in succession her husband and her son. Indeed the tragic figure of *Jerireh* reminds us of that of *Constance* in the immortal pages of Shakespeare. For, both *Jerireh* and *Constance* struggled against great misfortunes and superior power, utilising fully, though in

vain, their resolute will to protect a young son, who had been left to his own resources by the untimely death of his father.

While Firangis is a sublime figure of womanhood and a study in the graver phases of love, *Menijeh* delights us equally by her sprightliness and vivacity. The description of the passionate meeting of the lovers Bezan and *Menijeh* is one of the triumphs of Firdausi. But we must note that Firdausi is always the poet of the sanctity of married life, whether he is describing the loves of Zāl and Rodābeh, of Firangis and Siyāwash, or of Bezan and *Menijeh*. Any deviation from the duties of wedlock is visited by him with severe censure, as in the case of Sudābeh. At the same time, Firdausi is surprisingly modern in his views about love-making, and he does not believe in the theory of "the instinctive dominance of man." In his treatment of Rudābeh and of *Menijeh*, he is against the theory of Tennyson that:

"Woman is the lesser man, and all thy passions  
matched with mine

Are as moonlight unto sunlight, and as water  
unto wine."

Both *Menijeh* and Rudābeh take the initiative in their courtships assuming no needlessly coy concealments of their sentiments and exhibiting no false pride or unnecessary dignity. Neither can dissemble her real passion or the fervour of youthful tenderness. *Menijeh*, however, shows greater resource. When

Bezan hesitates to go to the capital of the much dreaded Afrāsiyāb, she fairly carries him off against his will. When Bezan recovers his consciousness and expresses his fears at being in the very palace of the Turanian King, she attempts—and successfully too—to quiet his fears. We are reminded of “the fairy mistresses of the Celtic hero; they abide in their own place, and they allure or compel the mortal lover to resort to them” (Dr. Alfred Nutt, *Legend of the Holy Grail*, p. 232). Indeed that is the very excuse offered to Afrāsiyāb by Bezan in his defence. Menijeh appears even more to advantage when, Bezan having been thrown into a miserable dungeon, she shows new aspects of her character—fortitude to endure and the greatest devotion to Bezan whom she keeps alive—even begging for bread in the streets in order to do so. The eulogy in which Bezan praises her as the ideal wife is fully deserved:

نوای جفت رنج آزموده زمن      فدا کرده جان و دل و چیزوتن  
 بدین رنج کزمن تو برداشتی      همه رنج را شادی انگاشتی  
 بکردی رها تاج و تخت و کمر      همان کنج و خوشان و مام و پدر

But while Menijeh has all the softness of spirit which adorns a wife, she has also the resolution to act and the spirit to dare which is natural enough in the daughter of Afrāsiyāb. It is she who lights the beacon that guides Rustam to the dungeon to release Bezan, she who pilots him through danger and saves his reason and life.

It behoves us before leaving this galaxy of heroines to mention the beautiful *Ispanui*, the wife of the warden of Turanian marches—Tazhāv. This prince was by origin an Iranian, who had settled in Turan, and he had a wife named Ispanui, the fame of whose beauty had spread to the Court of King Kai Khusrāu. We do not possess the whole story of Ispanui in the epic, and we are not told the reason why Kai Khusrāu was so desirous that she should be brought to Irān. And yet, for some mysterious reason, her capture is declared to be one of the great tasks of the Iranian Round Table:

کسی را که چون سربید تزاو      سزد گردارد دل و هوش و ناو  
یکی ماهروست نام اسپنوی      سمن بیکر و دلبر و مشکوی

Perhaps this anxiety to have her brought to Irān was due to the fact that she was a daughter of Afrāsiyāb, and hence a sister of Firangis, the mother of the Iranian king. Indeed Giw is made to say so much :

اگر مرزبانی و داماد شاه      چرا بیشتر زین ندای میاه

When Tazhāv attempted to save his life, Ispanui showed her wifely love by bravely sharing his danger and riding behind him in his flight. It was only when the pursuers were gaining on them that, at Tazhāv's own request, she dismounted in order that his horse might gallop quicker and carry him to safety. Obviously we have here another *triad*—all three daughters of Afrāsiyāb (*Firangis*, *Menijeh*, and *Ispanui*) finding shelter in Irān. It is also note-

worthy that it is Bezan, a scion of Gudarz (Gotarzes), who is given the credit of carrying two of these princesses (Menijeh and Ispanui) away from Turan. As we have seen above, the third one—Firangis—was also escorted to Irān by Giw, the son of Gudarz. Thus, we find, that in this aspect also, the Iranian epic manifests its usual partiality for the house of Gotarzes and concentrates knightly adventures on them.

#### THE PERSONAL ACHIEVEMENTS OF KAI KHUSRAU

It has been well emphasised that "Arthur himself is a rather passive figure in his cycle, just as Charlemagne in his. The Round Table becomes a frame-work, within which the poets place their gathering of adventures" (E. K. Chambers, *op. cit.* p. 155). Nevertheless, Arthur has been credited with a rather miscellaneous set of personal exploits having fought the giant Rion (on behalf of Leodegan of Carmelide), Mordred, Sir Lancelot himself, not to mention "the monstrous cat of Lausanne." But Kai Khusrau's personal feats of arms are regulated alike in the Shāhnāmeḥ and in Tabari's chronicle by a simple but essentially sensible rule. That Iranian King is to reserve himself for occasions when his knights are quite unable to operate with success. These are occasions, when the opponent is credited with great magical powers or with the possession of that Royal Glory, which makes its possessor immune to weapons of mortal warfare. Thus, in Firdausi's poem, Kai Khusrau has to proceed personally against Bahman-dazh (the fort of Bahman), where Bahman, the magician, is

holding out assisted by the powers of the Evil one himself :

بمیزیکه نجد دژ بهمن است شب و روز بیکار اهریمن است

There it was the Royal Glory which enabled Kai Khusrau to overcome magical devices :

بسن درفشى بر آورد رست ز کیتی بجز قر شاهى نخواست

The other great personal achievement of Kai Khusrau was his single combat with Shideh, son of Afrāsiyāb. Tabari notes that Shideh had most formidable magical powers, which daunted the whole Iranian army (Zotenberg, *Tabari*, I. 472). In the *Shāhnāmah* also, Kai Khusrau notes that Shideh's armour was of a magical power, which no ordinary arms could pierce, and that only he himself, as the possessor of the Royal Glory, could deal with Shideh :

سلاحش یدر کرد از جادوئی ز کثری و تارى و از بد خوئی  
نباشد سلیح شما کار گر بدان جوشن و خود و یولاد بر  
کسی را که یزدان نداده است فر نباشدش با جنگ او پا و سر

It was therefore that Kai Khusrau had to encounter and overcome Shideh personally. Later on, the King had to justify his action to Zāl in thus seeking the combat :

ازان بدکتر ایران ندیدم سوار ز اسپ افکنی از در کارزار  
که تنها بر او بچنگ آمدم چورفتی برز مش درنگ آمدم  
همی خوار بودی بجنگ بشنگ از ایران بدین من شدم تیز چنگ  
کسی را کجا فر یزدان بود دگر اخترش نیز رخشان بود

The only other occasion, when Kai Khusrau exerted himself personally, was when he repelled the very last charge made (by Barzwileh) on behalf of Afrāsiyāb and thus gained the honour of closing the long war.

It must be emphasised here that there is one great exploit of Kai Khusrau, that has been signalised in the Avesta, but which has been transferred in the epic to the credit of Ferāmurz, son of Rustam. Thus in the Rām Yasht (s. 31), Aurvasāra, "lord of the country", prayed in the White Forest (*Spastinish Razurāo*) that "the gallant Husravah might not smite us." Nevertheless the prayer was not accepted, implying that Kai Khusrau and his Aryans did smite Aurvasāra. Now in the Shāhnāme, at the very beginning of the war of vengeance, Kai Kāwus sends Ferāmurz to attack Verāzād or Verāzār, King of Sipinjāb or Sipijāb. I venture to suggest that *this Verāzār (or Verāzād) is the same as Aurvasāra*, and that Sipijāb or Sipanjāb is only a corruption of the Avesta name *Spastinish Razurāo*. The resemblance of names in both cases is striking. Again, in the Rām Yasht, Aurvasāra appears to have no connection with Afrāsiyāb but appears to be fighting on his own behalf, for "the White Forest", of which he was the lord, was possibly situated between Irān and Turan; and Kai Khusrau had to pass through it to reach Turan. So also the Shāhnāme makes Verāzād or Verāzār, the King of an independent country on the borders of Turan.

## KAI KHUSRAU'S VOYAGES

In the pursuit of Afrāsiyāb, oceans and deserts have to be crossed to decide the issue. Commentators have pointed out the geographical difficulties entailed in the description of Kai Khusrāu's voyages. They forget that we are on the ground of Zamyād Yasht, where the Royal Glory, which Afrāsiyāb failed to seize, took refuge in three several inlets of the sea, pursued by the Turanian monarch. It is of course a vain task to locate definitely these inlets of the sea on any map. They are mysterious and mystic oceans, over which Kai Khusrāu had to sail if he was to pursue that arch-magician Afrāsiyāb to his refuge at Kangdez, and even beyond it, if necessary. Epic heroes do not set out on their voyages with large scale maps to guide them.

Afrāsiyāb is endowed, according to the Yashts, with the capacity of traversing great oceans; and he utilises this in the Shāhnāmeḥ—threatening to fly across the "sea (river) of Kimāk" by night, and even to proceed to the starry spheres if pressed too hard by Kai Khusrāu:

بفرمان یزدان بهنگام خواب      شوم چون ستاره بر افتاب  
بدویای کیماک بر بگذرم      سیارم ترا کشور و افرم

Even in our times, students of ancient geography are not quite agreed regarding the exact location of the river of Kimāk. Only in very recent times, Minorsky has been able to throw light on the problem. He, too, has observed that "it is no easy task to locate the

Kimāk territory." But he concludes after a comparative study of Gardizi, Istakhri and other old geographers that "the principal territory of the Kimāk lay in Western Siberia, north of the Irtysh, say, up to the Obi." He also supposes that "the Kimāk (or at least their Khifchākh branch) extended, at some time, to the southern part of the Ural" (Minorsky's *Hudūd Al-'Ālam* in Gibb Memorial Series, pp. 305-6). Firdausi's general idea of the remote character of the Kimāk region (to which Afrāsiyāb proposed to retreat) is justified by the remark of Ibn Khurdādbēh to the effect that, before setting out from the south for that place, the traveller had to lay in stores of food for a journey lasting 80 days through the steppes.

As Spiegel has remarked, the course followed by Kai Khusrau in going over the sea would seem to persons with some knowledge of geography an extraordinary one. He starts from Bihisht Gang and traverses Khotan and China; and thence—after receiving the homage of the Khāqān and the Faghfur—to Mokrān. He halts there a year to subdue the prince of that place and to collect provisions and ships. Then, he undertakes a seven months' voyage and at last seizes Kangdezh itself (*Iranische Alterthums-kunde*, II, 651). The return is also along the same curious route—proceeding by ship to Mokrān and marching across China and Khotan and thence to Bihisht Gang, Bokhārā and Balkh. Nöldeke has also remarked that it is strange that, although the voyages were so long there was encountered only one

storm during a period of fourteen months (*Grundriss*, II, 177). He notes further that, in this case Firdausi took undue liberties with his geography.

Such critics should have noted that, while in the Pahlavi literature the administration of Kangdezh or its management is made one of the greatest exploits of Kai Khusrau (cf. *Dona-Mahmud-Kharad*, Chap. XXVII, s. 58), the geographical location of Kangdezh is very hazy according to them. Thus, in the same Pahlavi work, we are told that "Kangdezh is entrusted with the eastern quarter, near to Satavaesa, on the frontier of Airan-Veja" (Chap. 62, s. 12). Now as the star Satavaesa rules the western seas, Dr. West connects Kangdezh with the coast of Ummān and Mekrān, while the Pahlavi text connects it with the east of Iran. The confusion is rendered still worse by the connection of Kangdezh with the extreme north; for, as we read in the *Dinkard*, "the exalted (people of Kangdezh) wear black marten fur" (Book IX, Chapter 16, sec. 15). Moreover Kangdezh is placed by old authorities in some vague position *outside* the continent of Khvaniras. It was with the help of such confused and confusing authorities that Firdausi had to send King Kai Khusrau to Mekrān and China. And there was another reason why Kai Khusrau had to traverse a great part of Asia, since he had to justify his title of "the ruler of Khvaniras" (*Dinkard*, Book VIII, Chap. 13, sec. 14). Without conquering Mekrān, China and Khotan, that title would scarcely have been deserved. And as regards the speed of the voyage

and the absence of storms, the critic forgets that he who possesses the Royal Glory (*Hvarenō*) has mysterious power over the watery region, as has been shown elsewhere. Finally, the bards have made free with geography in all ages and countries. "As a matter of fact the geography of the romances was very confused and seems to have been largely a matter of names. Lancelot certainly takes a very roundabout route from Carlisle (north-western England) to Bayonne (south-western France) *via* Joyous Guard (north-eastern England) and Caerleon (southern Wales)" (S. B. Hemingway, *Le Morte Arthur*, p. 134).

The march of Kai Khusrau "all round the world" is to be compared to the mythical journey of Alexander the Great in his "Search for the Water of Life," or with King Arthur's "Harrying of Hades," or even with the Odyssey. It seems to be a law of the epic world that eminent heroes like Kai Khusrau, Alexander or Arthur should crown their great wars and conquests by travels or voyages into the ends of the world, which are uncharted and unmapped. And so, we read of Arthur who embarked in the ship Prydwen that

"Three freights of Prydwen went we into it  
Seven alone did we return from Caer Side."

#### THE PASSING OF KAI KHUSRAU

The most difficult task that faces the writers of great epics is to find a suitable and worthy termination for the careers of their chief heroes. Obvi-

ously the hero must accomplish his great task before he passes away, must leave the world better than he found it, and his end must be not only worthy of his life but also consistent with the mighty energies and strength with which he is credited. No wonder that the *Iliad* prefers merely to suggest how its hero died, and does not attempt to enter on a description of the close of his career. The Arthurian legends do give an account of the close of the King's career on earth, but they leave us very uncertain and doubtful whether the King was slain or was carried to the Other World or to the "Paradise of Avallon or Isle of Glass" to rest after his labours for mankind" (Weston, *op. cit.* 58, Chambers, *op. cit.* 221).

As Tennyson puts it in his *Gareth and Lynette*

"He passes to the Isle of Avilion

He passes and is healed and cannot die."

Two epics—the *Shāhnāmah* and the *Mahābhārata*—boldly cut the difficult knot by assuming that their hero ascended to heaven while still alive. Each of these methods of closing the epic has its difficulties.

To come first to the Arthurian romance, King Arthur can hardly be said to have finished his great work, since the heathen are about to triumph, while the problem of Lancelot and Guinevere remains unsolved. Moreover the knights of King Arthur have even in his lifetime ceased to be loyal to him or to themselves or to their high ideals.

As regards the line taken in the *Mahābhārata*,

that also differs from that in the Shāhnāmeḥ, inasmuch as in the former not only the partisans of the champion of wickedness (Duryodhana and his allies) but also the knights and heroes who fought for virtue and truth have perished, and the whole generation of heroes—good and evil—has alike passed away. As in the case of the Arthurian epic, this method of concluding the epic over-emphasises that element of contemplative sadness, which no doubt has a certain place in the theory of the epic. But is it not the function of the epic to “depict a victorious hero, who represents a country or a cause which triumphs with his triumph?” Do we not look to the epic to express “the poetical realization of the aspirations of a nation?” One great function of the epic is no doubt to teach, but another function is also to delight the human mind. Neither the poet nor the reader should be oppressed by the *denouement*, if an epic is to fulfil its object.

That optimism, which was characteristic of the Iranian race, has saved the “passing of Kai Khusrau” from the gloomy and melancholy aspects which have been noted above. Kai Khusrau has performed his life’s task in destroying that champion of Evil, Afrāsiyāb, who has been the bane of Iranian civilization for centuries. Indeed, the Zamyād Yasht describes Frangrasyān (Afrāsiyāb) as a super-fiend, who is as persistently active on the spiritual as on the terrestrial plane. Though, with his fall the main earthly work of Kai Khusrau has been accomplished, the

Iranian prince is given a glorious reign of sixty years, during which he performs other exploits. For, according to Hamza of Isfahan and the author of *Mujmil-ut-Tawarikh*, he destroys a great dragon on Mount Kushid and builds a fire temple on the spot. According to Firdausi, he also settles the affairs of Turan and secures peace between that country and Irān by appointing Jehn (the son of Afrasiyab) to fill its throne.

It is then that, *by a natural process and gradually*, spiritual longings come upon Kai Khusrau. He reviews the careers of his predecessors and recognises the danger of a long period of absolute royal power to its possessor—as exemplified by the instances of Dahāk and Jamshid and Kavius:

هر آنکه که ندیده نردددراز	ز شاهی و از دولت دبرياز
چو کاوس و جشید باشم بره	چون ایشان زمن کم شود بارگاه
چو ضحاک تا پاک و تور دلیر	که از جور ایشان جهان گشت سیر

It is no sudden impulse, then, which leads to the 'Great Renunciation' of Kai Khusrau, but a long experience of satiation with royal power. It is in these ways that Kai Khusrau's renunciation of the throne differs from that of the Pāndavas or even of the great Sākyamuni:

شده سیرازین لشکرو تاج و تخت      سبکبار گشتیم و بستیم رخت

The path of renunciation opens with a long period of solitary meditation, and when Kai Khusrau's resolve is taken, it is quietly announced to his Knights.

Firdausi is very realistic in his description of the way, in which these spiritual longings are viewed by the heroes including the venerable Zāl. It is at first generally supposed that it is some frenzy that has taken possession, or even that the Devil has been at work to cloud the royal intellect :

پشیمانی آید ترا زین سخن      بر اندیش و فرمان دیوان مکن  
وگر نیز جوئی چنین راه دیو      ببرد ز تو فر گیهان خدیو

It is even suspected that the supposed evil biological heredity of Kai husrau K has been working in the King and disordering his intellect :

ز یکسو نبیره رد افراسیاب      که جز جادوئی شب ندیدی بخواب  
چو کاوس دژخیم دیگر نیا      بر آژنگ رخ دل پر از کیمیا

Though thus Kai Khusrau has his motives misrepresented and his heredity reproached unjustly, he practises great self-restraint, and so calmly and admirably justifies his course, that Zāl and the nobles are driven at last to apologize for their conduct.

And here we note a great contrast between the Knights of Arthur and those of Kai Khusrau. The passing of Arthur is accompanied by a great development of treason and disobedience among his Round Table. Lancelot has left the court and his castle of Joyous Guard has to be besieged by Arthur. Under its walls, Arthur and Lancelot even meet in a combat. Many of Arthur's Knights espouse the cause of Mordred even though they do not recognize the justice of his claims, and Arthur is driven to exclaim that

his knights have become worse than heathens.

Far different is the behaviour of the Knights of Kai Khusrau. When that king announces his idea of renouncing the throne, they suspect that it is because they have fallen short of their proper service and obedience to their liege lord; and offer to be more faithful to him than ever before and to perform greater exploits for him:

بدان تازما خود درین بارگاه      چه آمد که برما بیستی تو راه  
 گراید و تکه بکشاید این رازشاه      بر این مرزین گم کرده راه  
 اگر غم زد ریاست خشکی کنیم      همه چادر خاک مشکى کنیم  
 و گر کوه باشد زین بر کنیم      بخنجر دل دشمنان بشکنیم

They were indeed ready to follow their King to the death and, when the time came, they proved this.

Then came the *second stage* in the King's renunciation of his throne. He appointed Gudarz his executor and gave away provinces to the chiefs who had served him so well—Seistān to Rustam, Isfahān to Gudarz and Khusrāsān to Tus. And then came the crowning announcement that Luhrāsp was to be the successor to the throne. Some murmurs were aroused by this unexpected choice of a successor, but they were suppressed when Kai Khusrau assured them that it was the Divine will that Luhrāsp should rule Irān:

مرا گفت یزدان بدو کن تورو      نکردم من این جز بفرمان او

This Divine command was reinforced by the assurance of Kai Khusrau that Luhrāsp was descended

from ancient kings. It was a curious circumstance, however, that this royal descent of Luhrāsp was until then unknown to any one :

که دانست جز شاهِ پیروزوراد      که لهراسپ دارد ز شاهان نژاد

Never was the end of one dynasty and the accession of another so well glossed over by a cleverly devised and highly poetic legend.

Now follows the *last phase* of the great renunciation, when Kai Khusrau, still followed by eight heroes of the Round Table, proceeded to the top of a lofty mountain and halted there for a week. He warned his companions to withdraw and to leave him alone to proceed on his mysterious path. Only three—the oldest of the group—Zāl, Rustam and Gudarz went back. The rest persisted in accompanying their master till he came to a river or fountain. Thence, he administered his last and most earnest warning to his loyal followers to retrace their steps while yet there was time, for a great snow storm was at hand. *On that watery surface Kai Khusrau was seen for the last time.* The Zamyād Yasht narrates how the Royal Glory arises from the Ocean, and the epic supplements that statement by showing how it was in the watery depth that the greatest representative of that Royal Glory disappeared. What has been so well said of King Arthur was also true of another head of a Round Table :

“From the great deep to the great deep he goes.”

We are reminded that the sword of Arthur which

represented his military glory rose from a lake and was taken up by another hand in another lake at the end.

As for the five Knights who had followed Kai Khusrau, they were buried in the snow-storm. They had been loyal to the end and were not separated from their King in death. *It was indeed a glorious catastrophe and termination for the Round Table of old Irān.*

Let us note once more how much the legend of King Kai Khusrau has been enriched not only by the introduction of Parthian heroes but by that of Parthian history. There is a *remarkable parallelism between these supposed incidents in the career of Kai Khusrau as narrated by the Shāhnāmah, and those of Parthian history of the age of Artabanus III and Gotarzes*. Just as Kai Khusrau was the son of an Iranian father and a Turanian mother, so Josephus has observed that Gotarzes was the son of a Scythian father and a Parthian Princess. Similarly also, while Kai Khusrau was brought back to Irān from Turan by Giw, Artabanus III was exiled more than once to Hyrcania and Adiabene by the dislike of his nobles, whose hatred had been sharpened by Roman bribes (Justi, *Geschichte des alten Persiens*, p. 166-7). He was supported on the throne by Gotarzes, son of Giw (Geopothros). Gotarzes calls himself on his coins the "Kalymenos" (chief general or, according to another version, the adopted son) of King Artabanus. In the Shāhnāmah also Gudarz is given the position of commander-in-

chief under Kai Khusrau. So, on his inscription on Mount Behistun, Gotarzes called himself "Satrap of Satraps." The expression "Kalymenos" which Gotarzes applies to himself is translated by Von Gutschmid as "alter ego of the King" (Gutschmid, *Geschichte Irans*, p. 123). It is also noteworthy that, since the accession of Artabanus, the succession to the Parthian throne was disputed on the ground that he was descended from the older Kings only on his mother's side. That corresponds to the disputed succession on the occasion of the accession of Kai Khusrau. To the Bahman-dazh incident in Kai Khusrau's career corresponds the fact that Rome was keeping a rival of Artabanus—Vonones—on the Persian frontier. At the request of Artabanus, Germanicus had Vonones removed to Pompeiopolis (Justi, *op. cit.* p. 165). The name Vonones also corresponds closely to that of the magician Bahman. Finally, on the death of Artabanus, after another period of exile in Adiabene, Gotarzes succeeded him (*ib.* 167), while in the Shāhnāme Kai Khusrau makes Gudarz the executor of his will.

#### A GENERAL COMPARISON OF THE ARTHURIAN LEGEND AND THE KAI KHUSRAU SAGA

Before concluding, it may be useful and instructive to institute a general comparison between the Arthurian legend and the Kai Khusrau *saga*. Such a comparison—it is submitted—forms *one of the curiosities of the comparative study of legends*, and hence we might indulge in it at some length :

(1) In the first place, we might note the close parallelism of the stories of the boyhood of Kai Khusrāu and of Perceval (Peredur). Both were boys, whose fathers had been murdered as the result of treacherous machination and who were brought up in forests by their mothers. In these forests, both spent their childhood in mimicking the knightly sport of hunting. Both young heroes are brought to a King's court, which they astonish by their ignorance of courtly ways and manners. Both heroes then pass on to the court of the old Fisher-King (represented by King Kāvus in the *Shāhnāmah*), who is lying maimed and sick, awaiting the arrival of his heir while his land is lying waste. In both cases, the hero restores the King to health and the land to prosperity. While Perceval has this great adventure through his exploits in the Grail castle, Kai Khusrāu achieves his work by seizing the magic castle (*Chateau Merveil*) of Bahman-dāzh, which is indeed a bespelled fortress. If Perceval has his "Vengeance Quest", so has Kai Khusrāu his most famous war of vengeance against the Turanian King Afrāsiyāb—a quest renowned equally in the Avestan literature and in the *Shāhnāmah*, and one which is indeed famed throughout the history of the world's literature. Then come equally remarkable parallels between the forms assumed by the Holy Grail, which was secured by the knight of Arthur's Court and the Royal Glory which, according to both the *Shāhnāmah* and the Avesta, was the priceless possession of King Kai Khusrāu. Thus, both the Royal Glory and the Holy Grail manifested

themselves in the shape of a marvellous Cup and a Stone of wonder working qualities. Finally, Perceval (according to Mannessier) was crowned King on the death of the Fisher-King, had a long and peaceful reign and renounced his crown to become a priest—an event after which, no one has ever seen the Grail. Similarly, King Kai Khusrau became a King on the death of King Kāwus, had a long reign of sixty years and then renounced the crown and ascended to heaven. Is this detailed and remarkable parallelism between the careers of Kai Khusrau and Perceval (Peredur) a mere coincidence? Is there any other example in the history of epic or romance to parallelisms of such cumulative character?

Proceeding further, we note that both Arthur and Kai Khusrau are to be regarded in a double capacity. Arthur is a "*solar hero as well as a "culture hero"*". Here, too, is a parallelism worth emphasising. Arthur slays various monsters like the giant of Mount S. Michel and the demon cat in *Merlin*. He holds the pagan hordes at bay and inflicts defeats on these heathens. He is also a great solar hero, and, indeed, many of his Knights were also solar heroes. As Loomis has well observed "the Grail heroes, Gawain, Lancelot, Boors, Perceval and Galaad, may all claim to be young sun-gods who have descended into Arthurian romance from the realms of Celtic mythology" (Loomis, *op. cit.* p. 156). Thus, the trait of increasing in strength until noon-tide is attributed to Gawain and Perceval, Galaad wears a red coat arms and sandals symbolising fire and Perceval bears the sun on his

shield. Merlin was also originally a Sun-god who, like the Iranian Mithra, "knows all and sees all". In his capacity of the "Shapeshifter", he becomes the Giant Herdsman with a huge mace, who spends his life with the wild herds and from a mountain top watches the courses of the stars. All these are characteristics of the Iranian angel Mithra, who bears a terrible mace, and who is also "the lord of wide pastures". There can be little doubt of the close connection between Mithra and Merlin.

Now, it is obvious that Kai Khusrau, too, is a "culture hero" and, as we shall see, has a right to be regarded as a "solar hero". As a "culture hero" he, like Arthur, defeated the Turanian nomads and slew their redoubtable King Afrasiyab, who had long been the terror of Iran. He is also a solar hero, since he was preeminently the King possessing the Royal Glory—that glory, of which the first possessor after Yima is the god Mithra (*Zamyād Yasht*, ss. 35 and 74-77). Indeed, there is something in the relation of Mithra to Kai Khusrau, that reminds us of the relation in which Arthur stood to Merlin; since, it is from Mithra that the Royal Glory could descend to Kai Khusrau. To crown the parallel, just as Arthur goes over "to pass a charmed life in Avallon from whence he will return to free his folk," so also Kai Khusrau disappears near a fountain of water to reappear in the last days. The idea of Arthur disappearing in the "great deep" and Kai Khusrau in a fountain symbolise the setting of the Sun over the ocean.

Finally it might be noted that the main problem

of the Arthurian *saga* and the Kai Khusrau legend is the same. Both Dr. Oskar Sommer and Miss J. L. Weston agree that "the original Arthur *saga* is very simple in form,—it is the stories connected with the other heroes who gathered round the British King, which have crossed and complicated the primitive legend. One, and that an important step in the great work of elucidating this confused tangle of romance, would therefore be the careful sifting of the stories connected with the individual knights; the attempt to discover which was the original form of each legend" (J. L. Weston, *The Legend of Sir Gawain*, p. 4; and Sommer, Introduction to the *Merlin*, p. viii). That is the very problem before the student of the Kai Khusrau *saga*—a problem, to the solution of which some contribution has, let us hope, been made here. Fortunately, in the case of Kai Khusrau, the Avesta and the Pahlavi records give us the historical ground-work. In dealing with the superstructure found in the epic, we have to separate the original historical and legendary forms of heroes like Rustam, Gudarz and Tus, and to show how the threads of their romances have crossed and recrossed, and how much each of these subordinate legends have borrowed from and lent to the main legend on which they have been superimposed and to each other. It is a great task lying before the critical student of the Shāhnāme, to which the present essay might serve as a humble introduction.

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## IV

### AN IRANIAN ODYSSEY:

#### GUSHTĀSP IN RŪM

In the *Shāhnāmah* of Firdausi, there is an episode about Gushtāsp who in his youth migrated to "Rūm" (Asia Minor), worked there as a blacksmith for a time, married a princess of the country and ultimately returned to Irān to assume the Iranian crown. My thesis in this paper is that the episode is an account of the spread of the use of iron to Iran from Asia Minor which had remained upto about 1200 B.C., "the metallurgical hearth which supplied the whole of the ancient world" (cf. M. De Morgan, *Préhistoire Orientale*, III, 384-386). In fact, this particular story about Gushtāsp bears on the advent of the Iron Age in Irān. In the second place, I submit that the same episode is one of the very few poetic narratives which bear traces of the existence of Hittite political power and religion. We have indeed a few such traces in the Bible where Shamgar, the son of Anath, represents at once Sangara, the Hittite King of Carchemish and Bur-Anati, his ally (*Cambridge Ancient History*, Vol. II, p. 386). But, in the present episode of the epic, we shall come across various religious and geographical places, well known in Hittite history. Lastly, as is only to be expected, some light is thrown by this appropriate dating on the age of Gushtāsp both as

regards his own time and upon the vexed question of the age of Zarathushtra. As has been well observed by a great master (De Morgan), "we must not seek to give to prehistory a precision which it lacks." Still, I submit that the present episode of the Iranian epic contains an interesting chapter on the diffusion of civilization and on the migrations of Iranian groups from the steppes of North-east Irān to Asia Minor at least, if not to Europe.

It might be of some use to refresh the memory of the reader about the main features of the Shāhnāme legends. Prince Gushtāsp being disappointed in his expectations that his father would abdicate in his favour, leaves Irān in disgust and resentment and proceeds to Rūm. He there attempts to earn a living as a horse-trainer (under Nestār, the keeper of herds of the local king), and later as a blacksmith, but with little success. Hence he is fain to be the guest and friend of Hishoo, who is of Iranian descent. Meanwhile, the King of Rūm holds a great assembly where his eldest daughter—the beautiful Katāyūn—can select her husband. As, however, her choice falls on Gushtāsp—an unknown foreigner—the King discards both the daughter and her Iranian husband. While Gushtāsp was thus living in poverty and obscurity he was approached by a young nobleman of the country, Myryn (میرن) who aspired after the hand of the second daughter of the King of Rūm. Myryn himself was unable to fulfil the condition of the marriage—the slaying of a great wolf that was then

ravaging the country. Hence Hishoo induces Gushtāsp to carry out that task in the interests of Myryn. Similarly, when another nobleman—Ahrin (اھرن)—seeks the hand of the third daughter of the King, it is again Gushtāsp who performs the exploit, which was the condition of this third marriage, *viz.* the slaying of a great dragon or Chimæra on the hill Scylla (سکلا). After these achievements, Katāyūn induces Gushtāsp to seek the favour of, and reconciliation with, the King by showing his skill as a cavalier. Gushtāsp succeeds in doing this and becomes a favourite of the King. He serves the King further by defeating Elias, the King of Khazars (a Caspian tribe). This victory so raises the confidence of the King of Rūm that he sends an embassy to demand tribute from the King of Irān. Lohrāsp suspects that his own son, Gushtāsp, is somehow at the bottom of this preposterous demand. Zarir, the elder brother of Gushtāsp, is sent to invite the latter back to Irān with his wife Katāyūn. In the end Lohrāsp abdicates in favour of his son, Gushtāsp.

#### A TYPE OF IRANIAN MIGRATIONS WESTWARD

The migration of Gushtāsp to Rūm (Asia Minor and North Syria), his working there as a blacksmith and his triumphant return to Irān seem to be a type of the migrations of Iranian groups from the North-eastern Steppes. Many great ethnologists have described such migrations and have reconstructed them for us with rare historic insight. Thus, the eminent Prof. J. L. Myers has observed that "clearly before

the time of the eighteenth dynasty, there had been a very extensive raid of the Indo-European speaking folk by way of the Persian plateau as far as the Syrian coast-land and the interior of Asia Minor" (*Dawn of History*, pp. 199-200). He adds that "the grass lands of Asia Minor are as open as Hungary or Persia to intruders who started from Turkestan or beyond" (*ib.* p. 191). So also another distinguished authority, M. De Morgan, tells us of the migrations of the men from the Steppes of North-east Irān, who crossed the Caucasus, entered Asia Minor and returned to the Steppes enriched with the knowledge of iron (*Préhistoire Orientale*, Vol. III, p. 383) and of new metallurgical processes. These migrations and others, in which the emigrants went on to Europe, are necessary for understanding the rise of the Hallstattian civilization which prevailed in Europe.

(a) IRANIANS SPREAD THE USE OF THE HORSE

In the light of these remarks of eminent ethnologists and historians, let us examine this episode of the Shāhnāme. The first thing that strikes us is that on his entry into "Rūm" (Asia Minor), he tries to earn his bread as a horse-trainer. To one, who asks for his occupation, he replies:

یکی کُرمِ نازم دلیر و سوار

(I am a bold horse-rider and horse-trainer). Moreover, it is to be noted that he at last rose to power by exhibiting such skill as a rider as surprised the King of "Rūm", where obviously skilful riding

was still a rare accomplishment :

پرسید و گفت این سوار از کجاست که چندین پیچد چپ و دست راست  
سر افراز کردان بسی دیده ام سوارى بدینگونه نشنیده ام

(The king asked whence is this rider who can turn his horse to right and left so well ? I have seen many exalted warriors, but have never heard of such a cavalier.)

This skill of Gushtāsp as a horseman reminds us that it was the emigrants from North of Irān, who introduced the horse into the West and especially in Asia Minor. Even after the horse was introduced, it was employed for a long time only in drawing chariots; and on a Cappadocian tablet, we have a representation of a chariot drawn by four horses (Eduard Meyer, *Geschichte des Altertums*, Vol. I a, p. 652). So also in Prof. Garstang's work on *The Hittite Empire*, we have representations of chariots drawn by horses. This ignorance of cavalry was of great advantage to the Iranian invaders and adventurers who were themselves expert riders. For "the horse-riding conquerors led their native levies for loot and lands", and overcame the resistance of the horse-driving Hittites (*Cambridge Ancient History*, Vol. I, pp. 106-110).

It is also to be remembered here that, according to the Avesta, Gushtāsp belonged to the Naotara clan, which possessed excellent riding horses. Thus, the Ashi Yasht (section 55) speaks of "the swift-horsed Naotaras". In the Ābān Yasht, we find the Naotaras worshipping that angel and asking for swift horses

with the result that "quickly became Vishtāsp, the Naotaride, the lord of the swiftest horses in these countries" (section 98). The very name of Vishtāsp, signifies "he who has many horses". We also know that some of the finest horses of Persia are bred in the Steppes in the north-east of the country. Such a person and his following would be well qualified to spread the use of the horse in remote countries. Corresponding to this hypothesis, again, Gushtāsp (in our episode) retained only horses for himself out of the presents offered to him :

بسی هدیه آورد میرین برش      بد انسان که او دید اندر خورش  
بجز دیگر اسی نپند رفت ازوی      وز انجا سوی خانه بنهاد روی

(Myryn offered Gushtāsp many presents such as he deemed proper for him ; but the latter accepted only another horse.)

Let us remember that the best breed of horses in North-eastern Irān was called the Nisaeon ; and corresponding to that name we find that, Nesā was the name of one of the leading towns in the ancient Hittite Empire. Hrozný believes that this Nesā was a place of great importance before the Hittite capital was fixed definitively at Hattou. Prof. Delaporte, in his great work on the Hittites, has called our attention to the fact of a chain of names of cities between Persia and the Hittite Empire bearing names closely allied to both Nesā and Nisayā in North-east Irān. He instances Nisayā in Media, Nesis on the Black Sea, Nesiotis to the east of Volga. Is it too much to

suggest that this chain of very similar place-names between North-east Irān and Anatolia may have something to do with the migration of some tribe carrying the horse into Asia Minor? (Delaporte, *Les Hittites*, pp. 55-56).

Prof. Herzfeld has collected a wealth of information and authorities regarding the introduction of the use of the horse, in his *Archaeologische Mitteilungen aus Iran*, Band VI, Heft 3-4, August 1934, pp 200-207. Some of the opinions arrived at and cited there are very relevant to our own thesis here. There is the conclusion about "Khwarizm-Erānvej" (corresponding to North-east Irān) being the most important centre, from which many other lands imported the business of horse-breeding. A second point of considerable interest is the evidence from a *Mitannian source* about the ultimately great growth of horse-breeding in Asia Minor. Here there is another piece of evidence connecting Iranian emigrants with the importation of the horse into Asia Minor. Finally, another fact put forward by Wrezinski and other scholars is worth noting, that the introduction of horse-breeding into many countries was no easy or rapid process but occupied many centuries. Thus, it has been supposed that it took Sumer from five hundred to a thousand years to introduce horse-breeding.

(b) IN RETURN THE IRANIANS LEARN THE  
USE OF IRON

But, if the Iranian emigrants introduced the horse-

to the people of Asia Minor, they themselves brought back from it many elements of culture—and in particular a knowledge of iron. Thus, Messrs. Peake and Fleure inform us, on the ground of the excavations of Mr. Raphael Pumpelly at the abandoned city of Anau (near Askabad in the North-east of Irān), that “the potter’s art reached Anau from somewhere in Anatolia, and it may be that other arts were derived from the same source” (cf. *Peasants and Potters*, p. 119, also Dr. Frankfort’s *Studies of Early Pottery of the Near East*). In the same work, we are told that the “Northern Syrian or Anatolian cultural area” must be credited with many inventions and discoveries, and that “most of the essential elements of civilization developed there within 200 miles of Aleppo” (*ib.* p. 96). Now, it so happens that Firdausi, in this episode, makes Gushtāsp take up his abode near Aleppo and by the sea-shore; for when his brother Zarir has to seek him, he has to go to the territory of Aleppo:

نیا سود کسی تا برز حلب جهان شد پراز شور و سنج و جلب

But indeed, with Messrs. Peake and Fleure, we must not make a distinction between Asia Minor and North Syria, but rather accept the two as forming one centre of culture (cf. *Priests and Kings*, p. 168). So, also, Dr. Eduard Meyer observes that in very old days the inhabitants of Kappadokia and of other parts of Asia Minor were called Syrians (*Geschichte des Altertums*, Vol. I 2, p. 611).

It is important to note that, as M. de Morgan has

put it, Asia Minor was before B.C. 1400 the metallurgical hearth, which supplied the whole of the ancient world (*Préhistoire Orientale*, III, 172). There is no need to remind the reader "that in classical antiquity the Cabires, the Dactyls and Corybantes of Asia Minor were famed for working at metals (*ib.* p. 174). We know also that the country exported iron to Egypt; since there is a letter of Hattushil, the Hittite King, to Rameses II informing the latter that, at the time of writing it, there was no iron in the ports of Kissuwadna (Kataonia) available for export to Egypt (*Cambridge Ancient History*, II, 272). We may place this spread of iron industry in Asia Minor about the thirteenth century before Christ; for in that century, as the records of King Anitta show us, iron was so valuable that a sceptre and a throne made of iron were considered valuable enough to be sent as a present from a prince to the King of Asia Minor (Delaporte, *Les Hittites*, pp. 59 and 238).

Now, it is remarkable that the Shāhnāmeḥ fully bears out this idea of Asia Minor ("Rūm") being a land of smithies and forges and the place for manufacturing high class weapons. One of the first persons, whom Gushtāsp encounters on his arrival in Asia Minor, was the owner of a fairly large smithy :

یکی نامور بود بوراب نام      پسندیدم آهنگری شاد کام  
همی کرد او عمل اسبان شام      وز او ترد قیصر بدی دستگاه  
ورامارو شاگرد بدسی وینج      زبک وز آهن رسیده برنج

(There was a distinguished person named Būrāb who was a well-known blacksmith. He used to make horse-shoes for the King and had great influence with him. He had thirty-five assistants and apprentices who took great pains with the anvil and iron.)

This Būrāb engaged the young Iranian immigrant Gushtāsp to work in his smithy. But the Iranian youth showed not only his immense strength but the national ignorance of the ironsmith's craft by breaking the anvil by his blows. We are not surprised to learn that, as a consequence, Gushtāsp lost his job at the smithy. This, however, is by no means the only mention of iron manufacture in "Rūm"; for we get repeated accounts of superior swords both old and new being available in the country. *In no other part of the Shāhnāmeḥ do we get such accounts of the manufacture or provenance of curiously shaped swords or dirks.* It is, of course, not a matter of surprise that the attention of the Iranian immigrants to Asia Minor should be attracted by the splendid weapons produced there which bore, again, remarkable shapes. Thus, when Gushtāsp is about to attempt to slay the giant wolf, an old and valuable sword is procured for his use :

بنزدیک او یست شمشیر سلم      که بودی همه ساله در زیر سلم  
بدو گفت گشتاسپ کان تیغ سلم      بیارید و اسپى سرافراز و کن

(Gushtāsp was told that Myryn possessed the old sword of Salm which the latter always kept carefully by his side. On this, he asked for that superior

weapon as well as for a fine and fleet steed.)

Again, when Gushtāsp is about to attack the dragon, he instructs Hishoo to prepare a long dirk of a special shape with a handle *like a flat plate*:

بدو گفت روخنجری کن دراز      یکی دسته به لاش چون پنجه باز  
 زهر سوش بر سان دندان مار      سنانی برو رسته بر سان خار  
 همی آب دادم بزهر ندرون      بتیزی و رتک آهنش آبگون

It is remarkable to find so well emphasised in this episode of the *Shāhnāmah*, the presence of the *three distinctive characteristics of the Hallstattian culture* which spread over the Danube valley, Central Europe and parts of France and Germany about 800-600 B.C. We have it on high authority that the first characteristic of that culture was the use of the horse for riding, the second was the use of iron, and the third is the prevalence of a *special type of sword*—the leaf-shaped sword with flat-handle plate (*Cambridge Ancient History*, Vol. I, pp. 106-110). We have seen how the Gushtāsp episode implies the introduction of the horse for riding by Iranian emigrants and the prevalence of the iron industry in Rūm (Asia Minor). We have seen Gushtāsp ordering an inhabitant of that country to prepare a sword with more than one edge and a paw-like shape. It is a singularly fortunate circumstance that a poetic work which was never meant to illustrate the march of civilization should happen to contain such exact indications of a particular and well-defined stage of civilization.

Thus, we come to see the truth of the remark of M. Jacques de Morgan about the migrations of the Hallstattians, who started from the North-east region of Irān, crossed the Caucasus, entered Asia Minor and then returned home enriched with the knowledge of iron (*Prehistoire Orientale*, III, 383). By Hallstattian culture, in its earlier phase, is generally understood "the Central European Early Iron Age Culture." Gushtāsp in the Shāhnāmeḥ is obviously described as a type of those who undertook such migrations. For, he left Irān because he had no hopes left of succeeding to the crown. But, after he has risen to power in Asia Minor (Rūm), he even threatened to make the Iranian King a tributary of his adopted dominion. He backed up heartily the intentions of the prince of Rūm in this matter :

بلهراسپ گوید که نیمی جهان تو داری و آرام و کنج نهان  
اگر باز بفرستی از مرز خویش به بینی سرمایہ و ارز خویش  
و کر نه سیاهی فرستم ز روم که از نعل پیدانه بینی تو بوم

(The King of Rūm told Lohrāsp that since the latter possessed half the world and much treasure, he would do well to send a tribute and thus secure his possessions. Otherwise such an army would be sent against him that its horse-hoofs would cover the land. Gushtāsp agreed with this idea saying that the world was at the feet of the prince of Rūm). In the end, Lohrāsp thought it good policy to placate Gushtāsp by sending him a kind message assuring him that on his return to Irān, the Persian throne would be his. Moreover,

the route followed by Gushtāsp on his return to Irān lay across the Caucasus and along the Caspian Sea, as is shown by his encounter with Elias, Prince of the Khazar tribe. While on the subject of the migration to and fro between the Steppes of North Irān and Asia Minor, it is interesting to glance at the researches of Mr. Raphael Pumpelly at the ruined town of Anau (near Askabad) in North-eastern Irān. As Mr. Harold Peake and Prof. H. J. Fleure observe, these excavations prove the existence of various "arts having reached Anau from somewhere in Anatolia" (*Peasants and Pottery*, p. 118). It is only when the numerous "Kurgans" near Anau as well as the royal graves in the Caspian and Caucasus regions are examined that we shall know how much old Irān owed to—or gave to—the great ancient cultural centre, comprising Asia Minor and North Syria. Prof. Childe has emphasised that there were chieftains from the Steppes of Irān who "had led their followers on plundering expeditions into Armenia, Cappadocia and even Mesopotamia" (*The Aryans*, p. 191). Gushtāsp obviously seems to have been one of them.

#### HITTITE NAMES IN THE EPISODE

If, on the one hand, the Gushtāsp episode introduces us to the characteristic civilization of Asia Minor, on the other hand, it shows contacts between the Iranian immigrants and the Hittites. Indeed, this second aspect of the poem is only a corollary of the first. For "the first production of iron appears to

be linked with the Anatolian area and the use of it industrially is connected with the extension of the Hittite power into the Syrian lowlands after 1400 B.C." (Dr. Rikard, *Man and Metals*, p. 870). In the epic, we have several names well known in Hittite annals—names of sacred shrines and localities. The very name of the princess who married Gushtāsp (Katāyūn) carries our mind back to the district of Kataonia (of which the earlier name was Kizwana or Kissuwadna), a sacred district of the Hittite land and also the most important iron-producing district of the country. There is nothing impossible in the episode, which represents one of the conquering cavaliers from Irān as marrying a princess of this district. She would naturally be called by the name of her paternal principality in Iranian songs and annals, as even now princesses are. We happen to know something more about this territory, which is interesting from the Iranian point of view. Kataonia contained a smaller state—Hani or Hanigalbat—which is famous in Hittite history and which was once ruled by a King named Shattura. This name resembles very greatly that of King Shutaturra of the Iranian tribe of Mitanni (*Cambridge Ancient History*, II, pp. 240-1, 261). If the principality of Kataonia already contained Iranian elements, the alliance of a Kataonian princess (like Katāyūn) with a more recent Iranian immigrant is more easily understood. It does not require the miraculous element of a dream which, according to the epic, induced the princess to accept as husband one

who appeared as an adventurer.

Another of these Hittite names is that of the aspirant for the hand of the third daughter of the King of Rām. That name is most often written as *Ahrin*, very likely to suit the metre. But at the start it is written as *Ahrin* when he is introduced :

گو پر منش دم او اهره ز تخم بزرگان و روئین تا

‘He was a wise warrior and his name was Ahrinā—one sprung from great men and himself of a strong body.’ Now Arinnā happens to be the name of one of the most important religious centres of the iron producing district of Kataonia or Kissuwadna (*Cambridge Ancient History*, Vol. II, p. 272). Indeed, it was the name of the old Hittite capital before Boghaz Keui (*ib.* 258-9). The deity of Arinnā was often regarded as a Sun-goddess, but the male form of the same deity was also widely worshipped since Strabo introduces us to Apollo Kataonian (Eduard Meyer, *op. cit.* p. 719 and Strabo, XII, 2, 5). It remains to be added that in Assyrian annals, the name Arinnā is spelt as Arunā, which gives it an Aryan implication, especially as it was a shrine of the Sun (*Cambridge Ancient History*, Vol. II, p. 272). It is not impossible that the cult of the Sun-god had been combined with that of the Great Mother at this shrine. We know that the Sun-goddess of Arinnā was the premier divinity of the Hittite realm, that she took care of the realm and was styled

"the queen of the Hatti" (Delaporte, *Les Hittites*, pp. 245-7).

We come next to consider the name of *Hishu*, who was the host and chief friend and adviser of Gushtāsp during his stay in Rūm. As Hishu remarks to Gushtāsp:

مرا بر زمین دوست خوانی همی      جزاز من کسی را ندانی همی

(You call me your friend and, indeed, you know no one else here.)

Now, this name Hishu recalls to us, on the one hand, "Ishuwa", a land of Mitanni subdued by the Hittite Shubbiluliuma (*Cambridge Ancient History*, Vol. II, pp. 237 and 261). It is also important to note that the district Ishuwa (or Isouwa) lay on the way from Kataonia and Hittite land to North Persia and Caucasus (Delaporte, *Les Hittites*, p. 26). Thus, a prince coming to Anatolia from the North-east of Irān would naturally pass through this land of Ishuwa. On the other hand, the name of Hishu also reminds one of "Ishupitta", which is another great Hittite sanctuary in the land of Kataonia (cf. Garstang, *Hittite Empire*). If Hishu represents the Mitannian inhabitants of Kataonia, his great friendship for an Iranian immigrant like Gushtāsp is easily accounted for. That hypothesis would also explain the account which he gave of himself to Gushtāsp at their first meeting that, although he was settled in Asia Minor, he was descended from King

Feridun:

من از تخم شاه فریدون کردم که این نغمه اندر جهان نیست خرد

Such a fact would explain both the hospitality of Hishu to Gushtāsp and the latter's generosity to Hishu on later occasions. We know from classical historians of the existence of Iranian colonies in Asia Minor, which kept up their old religion until a far later age—until the persecution by Justinian. But the present episode in the *Shāhnāmah* is *the only record on the Iranian side of such colonization from the days of Mitanni princes downwards.*

The three names from our episode mentioned already (Katāyūn, Ahrinā and Hishu) curiously enough form a group of Hittite names all connected with the principality of Kataonia. The next name to be dealt with takes us a little further afield; but a still larger commentary can be written on that name from contemporary Hittite and Egyptian annals. In the Gushtāsp *saga*, the name of "Myryn" (میرین) is given to the nobleman who sought the hand of the second daughter of the King of Rūm (Asia Minor) and ultimately obtained it through the heroic efforts of the Iranian hero. Now, we have it on the authority of Dr. Stanley A. Cook, that the Egyptians gave the name of "Myryn" to the noblemen from Syria and the North (*Cambridge Ancient History*, Vol. II, p. 328). Winckler has "conjectured that the 'Marianni' mentioned by the Hatti were a class or caste whose name is that of the Vedic Mārya or noble" (*ib.* 331). It is noteworthy, observes

Prof. Eduard Meyer, that in the Egyptian and Hittite texts, the word "Marianni" (which means warriors) has been applied to a certain ruling military class. The rise of this class has been connected with "a great forward movement" made by certain Iranian tribes towards the West in the middle of the 2nd millennium B.C. Some of these Iranian emigrants established principalities in Mesopotamia, Syria and Palestine. About the same time, the horse made his appearance in Babylonia, Egypt, and Greece (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 14th Ed., Vol. XVII, p. 566). The bearing of these important facts on the episode of "Gushtāsp in Rūm" is obvious. We may note here that Firdausi takes particular care to show that Myryn was of a noble descent. We note also Dr. Cook's remark that such evidence as a whole points to "the presence, amid influences of Asia Minor origin, of some distinctively Iranian (or Aryan) wave." This suggestion explains what is otherwise obscure in the episode, viz., why Gushtāsp after marrying the first daughter of the King of Asia Minor should be so anxious to obtain the hand of the second daughter for a stranger like "Myryn". For, if "Myryn" was himself a prince of Iranian nationality, the zeal of Gushtāsp on his behalf can be understood.

One more name, which appears in this episode of Gushtāsp, might be mentioned here. Soon after meeting Hishu, Gushtāsp encounters Nestār (نستار), who is the master of the herds of the King of "Rūm" and whom the prince requests for employment in the capaci-

ty of a horse-breaker. Nestar however turns down his request, for he cannot bring himself to entrust valuable horses to the care of a mere stranger like Gushtāsp :

یکی بد سرد از جگر برکشید      بسوی گه دار قیصر کشید  
جوانمرد را نام نستار بود      دلیر و خردمند و هشیار بود  
بدو گفت نستار ازین در بگرد      تو ایدر غربی وی پای مرد  
بیابان و دریا و اسپان گه      بنا آشد چو ت سیارم یله

Here, again, we remember that there is a chain of cities from North-east Irān to the Hittite land with names which are phonetically allied and which closely resemble that of Nestār. There is Nisaea in Irān, Nesiotis on the Volga, Nesīs on the Black Sea and Nesā in the Hittite Empire. The name of Nestār in the Shāhnāmeḥ is reminiscent of all these. It may be that he was an earlier immigrant from Irān into the Hittite land bringing flocks of cattle and of horses with him (cf. Delaporte, *op. cit.*, pp. 55-56).

*How or why these Hittite names of official dignity, of localities and of sacred shrines appear in the Iranian epic as personal names, I cannot profess to explain. That task must be left to the experts in Hittite archaeology. But surely it is a historical and literary curiosity that a bunch of closely related Hittite or Mitannian names does appear in the Shāhnāmeḥ. The suggestion might of course be made that personal names are often based on names of places. Thus, in France, before the Revolution, most names of aristo-*

crats were derived from place-names. So also many German or English names of persons are derived from local names.

Finally, we come to the outstanding exploit of Gushtāsp in killing the great dragon, which was devastating Asia Minor and whom he slew by smiting it with a sword and a dirk. After that event, Gushtāsp offers thanks to the Almighty, whose intervention had ensured his success. This reminds us of the famous Hittite legend of "the slaying of the serpent or dragon-god Illu-yankas by Inaras and the intervention of (the god) Teshub" (Garstang, *Hittite Empire*, pp. 206-207). In the sculpture of Maldija which records this event, both Inaras and the god assisting him are armed with swords. Prof. Sayce has drawn attention to the fact that the name Illu-yankas is an Indo-European one; and so here again the Aryan prince Gushtāsp is in his own element (*J.R.A.S.* 1922, p. 185).

#### SOME ANALOGOUS HITTITE LEGENDS

It is fortunate that we possess some Hittite legends which have quite a number of common factors with the episode of "Gushtāsp in Rūm". Just as Gushtāsp is said to have killed the great dragon at a place called سَكِيلَا (Sakilā) to assist his Hittite friend, so we have the story of the dragon Illu-yankas killed by the man Houpasija to assist the Hittite god Inar. That story begins by narrating how the great Storm-god encountered the snake at the town of Kiskiloussa

(cf. Sakilā of the *Shāhnāme*) and was worsted by the latter. Inar, the son of the Storm-god desires to avenge his father but, being unable to do so single-handed, seeks the aid of a man named Houpasija, who vanquishes the snake by a trick. Here we have a parallel to the story of Ahrin seeking the help of Gushtāsp to kill a dragon—just as Inar secures the help of Houpasija to kill his.

The motif of the prince (Gushtāsp), who is offended with his father and who wanders abroad and is long sought for in vain, is also paralleled in the other great Hittite legend. There, it is Telepinou, the son of the great Storm-god, who disappears having taken offence at some act of his father. The Sun-god sent the eagle and others to search for the prince but in vain. At last, the goddess of *Arinna* discovers the whereabouts of the missing prince by sending a bee on the mission (Delaporte, *Les Hittites*, pp. 250-253).

It is worth noting how many factors and elements are common to the episode of "Gushtāsp in Rūm" and these Hittite stories, which have been fortunately preserved for us. There is, for example, the disappearance of the prince whom some act of his father has offended, and the search made for him. *Arinna* also figures in the Epic and in the Hittite accounts. Further, there is the slaying of the dragon in both, and that, be it noted, not by the party who is to be benefitted—Inar in the Hittite legend and Ahrin in the Epic—but through the instrumentality of some

third party, who generously and disinterestedly undertakes to assist. Is Inar, then, the counterpart of Ahrin ?

Similarly, in the other legend of the conquest of the serpent Illouyanka, it is the god Inar who requisitions the services of a man named Houpāsiya for the purpose. Here also there are elements which are also met with in the episode of "Gushtāsp in Rūm".

#### HUTAOSA AND KATĀYŪN

An objection might be raised by some critic that, according to the Avesta, the wife of Vishtāsp was Hutaosa (cf. Ashi Yasht, section 46, and Rām Yasht, section 35) "of the Naotara house, she of the many brothers", and it has also been suggested that "Katāyūn" is a misreading for Hutaosa. To this, the answer is that, while Hutaosa belongs by race and geography to East Irān, Katāyūn is similarly from Rūm (Asia Minor). Hence, the two are not identical but must be different personages. Moreover, Katāyūn is mentioned as a queen of Gushtāsp not only by Firdausi but by Daqiqi who makes her the mother of Isfandiār and Peshotan. Finally, there is no difficulty whatever in assuming that Gushtāsp was married twice—to the princess Katāyūn in his youth, and to Hutaosa (the Naotarid princess) perhaps on the demise of the first queen.

#### OTHER POEMS CELEBRATING THE AGE OF IRON

The episode of Gushtāsp is not the only poem

celebrating the advent of the Age of Iron in the history of literature. Even the *Shāhnāme* itself sings elsewhere of Kāweh, the blacksmith, as the originator of the royal standard under King Faredun. That might refer to some important incident of the Iron Age in Western Irān, as the Gushtasp episode must refer to the introduction of that metal in Eastern Irān.

The *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* make repeated mention of iron. Thus, in the former, Achilles gives as a reward "a ponderous mass of iron to any one who could show his strength by throwing it furthest". Adratus offers to Atrides "well wrought iron" if the latter would spare his life. The Greeks also are shown to be exchanging "gleaning iron" for use.

In the *Odyssey*, too, we find a harter of steel for iron and of masses of "steel elaborate" in the treasury of Ulysses. So also, in the *Sagas* of the North, we have accounts of swords of superior metal. But none of these poems—whether Greek or Norse—does what the *Shāhnāme* does. For, it leads us back to the historical beginning of the Iron Age, takes us to the very country where that age was inaugurated, and introduces us to immigrants from other lands, who caused a diffusion of the new phase of culture. Even the Homeric poems came too late on the scene to give us much information about the beginnings of the Iron Age. But, by a singular curiosity of history, a poem, which came much later, has preserved for us what

must be called the *Epic of the Iron Age* in the shape of the episode of Gushtāsp in Rūm. It gives us some help in solving the problem raised by Prof. Gordon Childe and others—the relation of the Aryan element in Cappadocia and North Syria to Central Asia (*The Aryans*, p. 30).

#### THE AGE OF GUSHTĀSP AND OF ZARATHUSHTRA

The problems that we have been considering might furnish us with a new point of view from which to envisage the age of Gushtāsp and therefore of Zarathushtra. We have here some addition to the scanty data for calculating that age. At present Prof. A. V. Williams Jackson inclines to the seventh century B.C. as the age of Zarathushtra; and in this he is supported to some extent by Christensen's opinion that the monarchy of Kaianides is to be dated 900-800 B.C. (cf. *Die Iranier*, pp. 217-218). Bartholomae, Eduard Meyer and Andreas put Zarathushtra "at some time about the beginning of the first millennium B.C." (Jackson, *Zoroastrian Studies*, p. 17). The suggestions put forward in the present essay strengthen the case for the earlier date and indeed they might suggest a still earlier date, say, 1400 B.C. For arguments in favour of this view, let us see when the Iron Age made its appearances in different countries. Starting from Asia Minor, as the centre, we find iron weapons used at Hissarlik (Troy) in the twelfth century B.C.; in North Syria and Cyprus in the same century and in Palestine in the eleventh century (*Cambridge Ancient History*, Vol. I, p. 109).

The knowledge of using iron for making weapons reached Europe by 900 B.C. Iron swords had been carried by sea to South Italy before 1000 B.C. (Harold Peake, *Early Steps in Human Progress*, p. 212). "The knowledge of how to produce really effective iron goods was not acquired until about 1100 B.C.", says Mr. Peake. Now, we can assume that the art would take less time to spread to places like the Koban district of South Russia and the North of Iran than to Central Europe. If by 1000 B.C. iron swords "became common round the Eastern Mediterranean," the Iron age would make its advent into Northern Irān and the Koban district several centuries earlier. And, as the age of Gushtāsp coincided with the beginning of the Iron age in Irān, we may hypothetically place the age of Gushtāsp and of Zarathushtra at about 1400 B.C.

#### LITERARY INTEREST OF THE EPISODE

The poetic form and setting of the episode is in no way unworthy of the greatness of its topic. In the first place, the episode contains great feats of knight errantry on the part of Gushtāsp, who slays dragons and overcomes difficulty only in order to reward the friendship of Hishu, who welcomed him in a foreign land. His generosity is equal to his bravery and courage and justifies the adjective *Berezaidhish* (exalted) so often applied to him in the Yashts. Whenever presents are brought to him by noblemen, he keeps for himself only the articles needed by a

knight-errant and gives away all others :

چو کشتاسب آن هدیه‌ها بنگرید      همان اسب و تیغ از میان برگزید  
دگر چیز بخشید هبشوی را      بیاراست جان جهانجوی را

(When Gushtāsp saw the presents he selected for himself only a sword and a horse and gave the other articles away to Hishu—thus gladdening his soul.) It is solely by his personal prowess that he chooses to rise to distinction. When requested by Katāyūn to show his accomplishments to the King of Rūm, he distinguished himself alike by his skill in playing the game of polo and in managing his horse. His gratitude to the King of Asia Minor shows itself in defending the latter from Elias, the prince of Caucasian race, who sent in a demand for tribute. Here, again, is another reminiscence of the old days, when Caucasian princes used to raid Asia Minor for plunder or conquest. The only questionable trait in this character of a chevalier *sans peur et sans reproche* is his willingness to back up the King of Asia Minor in his demand on Lohrāsp for tribute. But, even here, it was surely a case of a conflict of loyalties.

If the hero is cast in the mould of a true knight-errant, the heroine is one of the most attractive in the whole range of Iranian ladies in the epic. She reminds one strikingly of Menijeh. For both Menijeh and Katāyūn marry a foreign hero against the wishes of their royal fathers. Both do their best by their com-

panionship and their exhortations to cheer up the spirits of their despondent husbands. Both serve their husbands faithfully and lovingly in long periods of adversity, and both are instrumental in rescuing their husbands from an adverse fate. But while Menijeh is more brilliant and attractive in the season of prosperity and love, Katāyūn shows more initiative in adversity. It is on her advice that Gushtāsp at last resolves to seek reconciliation with the King of Rūm by showing his accomplishments as a cavalier.

The literary interest of the episode is heightened, when we notice its resemblances to some very old poems of other countries. For Irān was not the only country which sent its princes to Asia Minor to take advantage of its metallurgical progress and civilization. Like Gushtāsp of Irān, Jason of Thessaly also has been disappointed of hopes of royalty and proceeds to Asia Minor in quest of the Golden Fleece. Like the King of Rūm in the *Shāhnāmah*, Aeetes (the King of Colchos) refuses to give up the Golden Fleece, until Jason yokes the bulls which snorted fire, and ploughs the field of Ares. This condition could not have been fulfilled by Jason but for the help of Medea (the daughter of Aeetes) who had fallen in love with Jason, as Katāyūn had fallen in love with Gushtāsp.

Perhaps, a hypothesis might be hazarded here to account for the appearance in the *Shāhnāmah* of an episode relating to such an ancient epoch in the history of civilization. We know that this epic has absorbed entire and independent romances like those of

Bahrām Chobin or of Bezan and Menijeh. Like the romance of Bahram, there might have been an ancient narrative of Gushtāsp which retained reminiscences of exploits and adventures of some former Iranian princes in the Hittite land. The particular narrative, which appears in the Shāhnāmeḥ, is a variant of the legend of prince Zariadres and the princess Odatis, to which reference has been made by Chares of Mitylene. The version incorporated in the epic is obviously a fuller and more detailed one and has fortunately for us retained copious reminiscences of the Hittite period.

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## THE EPISODE OF ISFANDIÄR

A comparison of the character and role of individual heroes in the *Shāhnāmah* and in the *Yashts* and *Pahlavi* works brings to light many discrepancies which deserve to be accounted for by a close study. Thus, we have already noticed, the greatest exploits attributed to the warrior Tās in the *Yashts* have been transferred to the Gudarz family in the epic. There are other instances of the sort, disclosed by a comparative study. But nowhere is the discrepancy greater than in the case of the youthful hero Isfandiār. Thus, the exploits attributed to his father Vishtāsp (*Gushtāsp*) and his uncle Zairivairi (*Zarir*) are passed on to the credit of Isfandiār, while the characters of *Gushtāsp* and *Guruzan* (*Kavarazem*) have suffered deterioration, and even the heroic stature of *Rustan* has been lowered, to glorify Isfandiār. The motives of this procedure deserve a study. The riddle of Isfandiār is in fact not merely one—there is a fair number of them.

In the *Yashts*, most of the exploits of the "War of Religion", ascribed in the *Shāhnāmah* to Isfandiār, are represented as performed by *Gushtāsp* (*Vishtāsp*) and his brother *Zairivairi* (*Zarir*). Thus, in *Ābān Yasht* (s. 109) and *Ashi Yasht* (s. 50), it is *Gushtāsp* who defeats and puts to flight the wicked *Arejat-aspa*, besides his allies, and who has the honour of winning

“the battles of the world”. This is repeated in Zamyād Yasht (s. 87). In the Yashts, the chief ally of Vishtāsp in winning these victories is Zairivairi; for the language employed is exactly the same—both are said to have overcome Arejat-aspa “in the battles of the world” (Ābān Yasht, s. 113). Then again in Ābān Yasht (ss. 116-117), both Arejat-aspa and Vandarimaini (in Shāhnāmeḥ Arjāsp and Andarimān) indicate that their opponents are “the valiant Kavi Vishtāspa and Zairivairi who fights on horse-back”. (We note that in the Shāhnāmeḥ, these two were overcome and slain by Isfandiār). Coming again to the Farvardin Yasht (ss. 102-103), the Fravashi of Isfandiār is invoked alongside of those of princes of the line of Gushtāsp, like Zairivairi, Frash-hamvareta (Farshidward) and Kavarazem—Isfandiār being distinguished only by the title “Takhma” (gallant). This title was certainly a distinctive one, since Isfandiār shares it with Zbaurvanta (s. 106), Hoshang (s. 107) and the Kavi Kings (Zamyād Yasht, s. 72). We read moreover in the Bundeḥesh (chapter 32, ss. 5-6) of Khurshed-chehar, a warrior and commander of the army of Peshyotanu, son of Vishtāsp, dwelling in Kangdez and of Peshyotanu himself as the high priest of Kangdez—but there is no mention of Isfandiār as the hero who stormed Kangdez. It was built by Siyawash, seized and managed by Kai Khusrau and governed by Peshyotanu (*Dinā-i Māinōg-i Khirad*, chapter 27, ss. 57-59 and chapter 62, s. 12); but we are not told that Isfandiār seized it. Possibly in

ages long past, the warrior Tūs had taken it "from the valiant sons of Vācsaka" (Ābān Yasht, s. 54).

Thus, the references in the Avesta and in the Pahlavi works to Isfandiār do not prepare us for the blaze of glory which surrounds that hero in the Iranian epic. Thus, in the ninth book of *Diinkard*, where we read much about "the worthiness of the sovereignty of Kai-Vishtāsp on account of great ability and activity" and his minister Jamasp (*S. B. E.* Vol. XXXVII, p. 296), we have no account of Isfandiār. In the eighth book of the same work (chapter XI, s. 4), we have an account of "the outpouring of Arjāsp, the Khyon, by the demon of wrath, for war with Vishtāsp and disturbance of Zarathosht and the arrangements and movements of King Vishtāsp for that war" (*S. B. E.* Vol. XXXVII, pp. 24-25), but here again we look in vain for any mention of Isfandiār.

In the Pahlavi works generally, the merits of Isfandiār in spreading the faith is recognized, though the particular exploits attributed to the hero in the epic are not specified. Thus, in the *Shikand Gumanik Vijār*, he is put on the same level as other princes related to Gushtāsp. "Kai Spend-dād and Zargar and other royal sons instigating the many conflicts and shedding the blood of those of the realm, accepted the religion as a yoke, while they even wandered to Arum and the Hindus, outside the realm, in propagating the religion." In the *Shatroiha-i Airan*, Isfandiār is said to have founded a great fire-temple at Navāzak near Balkh-i-Bāmik and to have sent messages to King

Arjāsp and other Turanians warning them that his spear constituted the defence of Irān (Jackson, *Zoroastrian Studies*, p. 272).

#### THE APOTHEOSIS OF ISFANDIĀR IN THE EPIC

When, however, we turn to the Iranian epic, we come upon a very different picture. Far from winning "world battles" and overcoming Arjāsp (Arejatasp) and Andarimān (Vandarimaini), Zarir is represented as slain in the very first battle by Bidarafsh, while Gushtāsp is reduced to utter despair. It was then that Isfandiār is brought forward and is made to turn a hopeless struggle into complete victory. The Turanian enemy was so utterly routed that even King Gushtāsp took pity on them, while his army celebrated "this victory which was worthy of a Rustam":

ازیشان بکشتند چندان سپاه کجا رحمت آورد گشتاسپ شاه  
همه شب نخفتند از خرمی که پیروزی بودشان رستمی

It is the death of Bidarafsh which turns the certain defeat of the Iranian army into a resounding victory. For, when Gushtāsp called for some one to deal with this Turanian archer, no one volunteered to encounter that formidable warrior, who was now proudly ranging the field in the armour of Zarir as Hector did in that of Patroclus:

ز لشکر نیاورد کسی پای بیش نجبید ازیشان کس از جای خویش

It is then that Isfandiār wins his spurs by slaying Bidarafsh. But, we note, that out of four of our authorities only two—*viz.* Firdausi (or rather

Daqiqi) and Tabari accord to Isfandiār the glory of smiting Bidaraish. The other two—the Yātkār-i Zarīrān and Tha'alabi (in his *Glaurur-i-Akbbāri Muluḥ ul Furs*) differ on this vital point. And this shows that, as yet, the Isfandiār *saga* had not become definite and crystallized; rather that men were still busy with their task of multiplying the exploits of that hero.

The second war of Gushtāsp with Turan brought even more glory to Isfandiār, as narrated in the epic. For, in the course of that expedition, he emulates Rustam by having a *hufthūwān* of his own on the journey to Ruindezh. Here and in the capture of the fort, he shows not only bravery but skill. It is to be noted that there is a contrast between the exploits of Rustam and of Isfandiār. While the former owes his successes to sheer hard fighting, the latter shows, besides courage, a great deal of stratagem, and even craft which are characteristic of the more civilized Iranian race, to which he belonged. Thus, the road to Ruindezh was found by plying the reluctant Kergesar with drink and holding out promises. The Simurgh is killed by a contrivance not unlike the wooden horse of Troy. Finally, Kangdazh is taken by skilful artifices, which mislead the enemy and induce a great part of the garrison to leave the fort, and thus to weaken its defences.

#### EXAMINATION OF SPIEGEL'S THEORY

A number of eminent critics like Spiegel and Nöldeke have contended that this second phase of

the war on Arjāsp "is something artificial and not original" (Spiegel, *Iranische Alterthumskunde*, Vol. I, p. 719). This line of criticism began with Macan who noted that the campaign of Isfandiār against Ruindezh in Turan was an imitation of that of Rustam against Mazendaran (Preface, p. 38). Spiegel added that the character of the heroes on both sides in this second phase of Isfandiār's fight against Turan is not of a conspicuous nature, nor is their courage to be compared with other heroes of the epic. Spiegel's view is that the priestly composer of the original chronicles of Persia worked at the task with the motive of showing that the champion of their faith—Isfandiār—was in no wise inferior to the unbelieving Rustam, but was, indeed, superior. Hence, they attributed to him exploits in his campaign against Ruindezh, which must be as brilliant as those of Rustam in his expedition against Mazendarān. He too must have his "*Haftkhwān*" like Rustam, and must encounter equally great dangers. Finally, if he is to die at the hands of Rustam, the latter must be assisted by powers of hell and their machinations. It is not Rustam's strength but the sorcery of Zāl, which is to cause the destruction of the champion of the Zoroastrian religion:

بمردی مرا پوردستان نکشت      نکه کن بدین کز که دارم بمشت  
 ازین تیر شد روزگارم بسر      ز سیمرخ وز رستم چاره گر  
 قسوها و این بندها زال ساخت      که این رنگ وبوی از جهان او شناخت

Moreover, the priestly composers further decreed

that he who slew Isfandiār should live in misery, die soon and have an evil fate in the other world as well. As the Simurgh himself informs Zal:

که هر که که خون یل اسفندیار بریزد و را بشکر در روزگار  
همان نیز نه زنده باشد برنج و هائی قیاید نمادش کنج

Nöldeke agrees with Spiegel that the exploits attributed to Isfandiār were an imitation of those of Rustam (*Grundriss* II, 139).

It is submitted here that the Spiegel's theory exaggerates both the resemblance of the exploits of Isfandiār to those of Rustam and the working of the priestly animus against Rustam. As regards the first point, it is obvious that the champion of the new faith must face the opposition of the powers of Evil, including demons and witches, whom Isfandiār encounters on his way to Ruindezh, and that one who penetrates so far north into Turan must expect to meet with snow-storms, as the same hero did. For the rest, one who traverses the steppes of Turan has to face lions, wolves and, in ancient times, dragons as well. The *Haftkharvān* of Isfandiār is thus more realistic than that of Rustam. Had the priestly composers been in earnest about showing the superiority of Isfandiār over Rustam, they would have their hero kill the Simurgh and storm the Ruindezh at the point of the sword; they would not have resorted to mechanical contrivances in the former case and to various ruses in the other.

Again, assuming that the priestly chronicles

really desired to show the superiority of the champion of the faith, they seem to have bungled very badly in their supposed effort. For, in trying to prove the moral superiority of Isfandiār, they have degraded an even greater representative of the Zoroastrian religion, Gushtāsp, to the lowest moral depths. As Spiegel himself observes, Gushtāsp is made to appear in the worst light and this protector of the faith is given the role of "an intriguing liar." He is shown eager to sacrifice a heroic son in order to retain his crown, to malign the character of Rustam, and to ruin the military strength of his kingdom. In fact, they also demonstrate the moral superiority of Rustam over Isfandiār; for the former risks his life in order to preserve his honour as a warrior; while the latter brings on a civil war in his greed for a crown. Of the three celebrities, Rustam attracts our sympathy and admiration most, Isfandiār comes next, while Gushtāsp forfeits all claims to honour either as a king or a father. Can we suppose the priestly composers of the epic or chronicles to go about their task in this reckless spirit?

Moreover, had these priestly writers been attempting to exalt Isfandiār at the expense of others, they had, at their disposal, a very superior instrumentality, which they would appear to have missed most unaccountably. Admittedly even upto the Parthian age, the Avesta was being edited, and nothing would have been easier than to have introduced the eulogium of Isfandiār in some of the Yashts. But there has been

no effort in that direction. For, in the Yashts, it is Gushtāsp who wins "world battles" and overcomes the foes of faith like Arjāsp and Tathravant and Peshana. In those liturgies, Zarir still triumphs not only over Arjāsp but over Pesho-changha and Humayaka. Even Jamasp, of whose military exploits we hear nothing in the Shāhnāmah, is proclaimed to be "as constantly victorious as any one of all the Aryans" (Ābān Yasht, s. 69). Nothing is said however about the exploits of Isfandiār.

These considerations must lead to the conclusion that *it is to the lords and not to the priests that one should attribute the dramatic 'mise en scene' and arrangement of facts by which the merits of Isfandiār are magnified at the expense of others like Gushtāsp, Gurazm and even Rustam.* A young hero outshining older ones is a motif to be found in many epics. A young and brave prince slain in conducting a war of religion in a difficult country must have been regarded in the light of a martyr. Ballads and romances must have been composed in his honour, and, as time passed, the meritorious acts of Gushtāsp and Zarir would be placed to his credit. The process of accumulation and of transfer of honours is well-known in epics even when it involves a "flagrant departure from tradition." Thus, in the legends of Arthur, the leading place once given to Gawain was taken away from him and given to Perceval and later on to Lancelot who was only "a late-comer into the charmed circle" (Weston, *Quest of the Holy Grail*, p. 19). Then, again, in

order to prove the superior merit of Perceval and Lancelot "Gawain has been debased beyond recognition; the Knight *sans peur et sans reproche*, of our old English tradition of earlier cyclic fame, has become a hardened reprobate, immoral, reckless, irreverent, inferior not only to Galahad and Perceval but to the Knights of later invention" (*Ib.* 25-26). Similarly other characters, even the highest, are degraded to balance certain faults of others. Thus "Arthur's infidelities are obviously invented to palliate Guinevere's; his parenthood of Mordred to sharpen the tragedy" (Chambers, *Arthur of Britain*, p. 166).

We seem to be watching a similar process in the development of the *saga* of Isfandiār. The tragedy of his death is sharpened if he is sent to his death by his father who was fully aware (from astrological dicta) that young prince was to meet his fate at the hands of Rustam:

که هوشی در زابلستان بود بدست یل پور دستان بود

An old father sticking to his crown even at the cost of sacrificing a brilliant son was invaluable as a piece of dramatic setting. Similarly the glory of Gushtāsp and Zarir in overcoming Arjāsp (noted in the Yashts) might be transferred to Isfandiār with advantage (from the literary point of view), as it would increase the halo of glory around the young prince and popular favourite. And, after all, the popular audiences, before whom the exploits of Isfandiār were to be recited and sung, were not quite familiar with the Yashts.

It remains to be added that Gushtāsp and Zarir were not the only personages whose exploits and character have been lowered in the interests of Isfandiār. There remains prince Gurazm who has been made the villain of the piece, because he reported to his father Isfandiār's idea of seizing the crown and thus had the latter hero put into prison. Gurazm was thus indirectly accused as the author of the great misfortunes which befell the Iranians during the imprisonment of Isfandiār, including the storming of Balkh by Arjāsp and the death of Lohrāsp. However, when we consult the Avesta, we find this Gurazm remembered as "the holy Kavārazem," immediately after Isfandiār himself and the heroic Bastavairi in the Farvardin Yasnt (sec. 103). He could not have been thus honoured had he been the author of the great misfortunes referred to above. Moreover, as regards the designs of Isfandiār on the throne, Firdausi himself leaves us in no doubt. For, he makes the prince pronounce a tirade against his father and demand the crown in very plain language. He accuses Gushtāsp of taking his case in Sais-tan, leaving the aged Lohrāsp to be massacred, and of breaking his promise in the matter of abdicating in favour of Isfandiār. Finally, he asks, what further excuses Gushtāsp can put forward for delaying the performance of those promises :

بزابل شدی بلخ بکذاشتی      همی رزم را بزم پنداشتی

دیددی همی تیغ ارجاسپ را      مکنندی بخون شاه لهراسپ را

ز ترکان گریزان تن شهریار      همی پیچد از بند اسفندیار  
بهانه کنون چیست من برچه ام      بر از رنج یویان ز بهر که ام

These lines, it is suggested, form the best vindication of Gurazm and prove that he did not accuse Isfandiār *falsely* of entertaining designs on the royal throne.

#### THE TRAGIC TRILOGY OF FIRDAUSI

But, although it has to be admitted that Firdausi, or rather his predecessors in the construction of the epic, have departed markedly from the old Avestan tradition, there is great compensation to be noted on the side of literary and artistic beauty. With the episode of Isfandiār, Firdausi achieves a trilogy of tragedies of noble youth persecuted alike by their foes, their friends and their Fate. These tragedies, it need scarcely be said, are those relating to Sohrāb, Siyāwash and Isfandiār. The untimely death of innocent youths has always made a great appeal to the genius of Iran; and perhaps one great reason for the national attachment to the Shiah faith is the appeal made by the tragic end of Hasan and Husain in their youth. This aspect of national psychology goes back far into the past, and it is summed up brilliantly in one line by a poet, who observes that after the death of the young and the graceful, roses should not bloom in the garden nor the nightingale sing :

یس از مرگ جوانان گل مماناد      یس از گل در جن بلبل منالاد

But, even when dealing with this one topic, the

Iranian genius cannot cease inventing ; and each of the three tragedies of youth and the creativeness behind them assume different shapes. In the case of Sohrāb, there is to be found everything that can make for a splendidly happy *dénouement* except recognition. The son is yearning for his father and feels the filial instinct well up in his heart ; the father is full of admiration for the son and sings his praises without reserve. It is the pride and passion of Rustam, or perhaps his fears, that come in the way of mutual recognition. Some other factors too intervene—the fears of Hōjir for the safety of Rustam and the machinations of Afrāsiyāb also work as the instruments of Fate.

In the case of Siyāwash we are shown how austere, unbending, uncompromising virtue can serve as the instrument of tragedy. Had Siyāwash yielded to the wiles of Sūdākāh, or had he been less strict in the observation of the terms of his treaty with Afrāsiyāb, he could have led a happier life. But the world, as it is constituted, frowns on such extreme and single-minded virtue. And the virtuous Siyāwash is surrounded by people whose presence bode him little good. There is his uxorious father Kāus, his step-mother Sudabeh who loved him but too passionately, and, finally the intriguing and envious Gersivez.

In the last of the tragedies, a new factor is brought in, which is not present in the former two. While Siyāwash and Sohrab are the passive victims of hostile intrigue and of circumstances, in this case Isfandiār is deliberately sent to his fate by his father, and that

under the guise of working for the son's good :

به پیش سران ینها دادیم    نهانی بکشتن فرستادیم

Bitterly, Isfandiār inveighs against his father at the end, that it is not Rustam and his arrow but Gushtāsp that really brought about his end:

نه رستم نه زال و نه مرغ و کان    همی از تن من بیردتد جان  
که این کرد گشتاسپ با من چنین    برو بر بخوانم ز جان آفرین

The tragedy is sharpened by the fact that the father was led to such proceedings by the misrepresentations of Isfandiār's brother (Gurazm); and that it was the sorcery of Zal which enabled Rustam, who had been otherwise overmatched, to terminate the most promising career in Iranian history. To this accumulation of tragic circumstances remains to be added the fact that the young hero really believes that his merits and achievements entitled him to the throne even in his father's lifetime. Isfandiār has indeed one weak trait (in his otherwise perfect character), for which he suffers sorely and which proves fatal to him. This matchless warrior and highly meritorious champion of faith has a single weakness—ambition. He shared the failing of Caesar—a great desire for Kingship. He would reproach his father for not transferring the crown to him and would absent himself in a pique for days from the court :

سوم روز گشتاسپ آگاه شد    که فرزند جوینده آگاه شد

Even in his dying speech, the hero persists in justifying this ambition, arguing that since he had been

the means of propagating the true religion in Irān, he had a right to the throne :

بایران چو دین بهی راست شد      بزرگی و شاهي مرا خواست شد

The last—but not the least—circumstance which is brought in to deepen the tragedy is the youth of Isfandiār. He is still so young that his sweet smile affects old Rustam and wins his sympathy even in the moment of delivering a challenge :

لب مرد برنایر از خنده شد      همی رستم آن خنده را بنده شد

And, further, Rustam is made to feel that it is just the youthfulness of his antagonist that would deepen his own disgrace should he surrender :

که رستم ز دست جواني نرسد      بزا بل شده دست او را بیست

Isfandiār's youthfulness is further emphasised when Rustam, after dealing the mortal wound, thinks of the grief that is to be felt by the mother of Isfandiār :

هم اکنون بخاک آید رست      بسوزد دل مهربان مادرت

And Rustam was right; for the last thoughts of the dying hero were of his mother, and of her woe and of the fatal blow to her :

چو زو باز کردی بمادر بکوی      که امرگ آمدای مادر مهرجوی

پس از من تو زود آی ای مهربان      تو از این مرغ و مرغیان روان

The early death of the young hero was thus passionately mourned by Firdausi; and the same sentiment finds equally eloquent expression in another

great poet—Homer :

“ If then a whirlwind from high heaven invades.

“ The tender plant and withers all its shades ;

“ It lies uprooted from its genial bed,

“ A lovely ruin now defaced and dead ;

“ Thus young, thus beautiful Euphorbus lay.”

While thus, on the one hand, Isfandiār is the hero of a great Iranian tragedy, his life has an important historical significance as well. For, Isfandiār had historical successors in some ambitious, high-spirited and too popular crown-princes of Irān, whose impatient longing for the crown led to their untimely ends. A very good example was that of Riza Quli, the warlike and highly popular son of Nadirshāh, who was blinded by his suspicious father. There is no proof of Riza Quli having plotted against his father, though various acts of the latter had aroused the resentment of the prince. Similarly, Shah Abbās, the Great, became jealous of the popularity of his son, Safi Mirza and had him stabbed. As General Sykes observes, even here some allowance should be made for the position of a sovereign of Persia, whose ill-wishers would certainly endeavour to make his heir the instrument of their policy (*History of Persia* II. 267). We have to make a similar allowance in the case of Gushtāsp.

THE LITERARY MERIT OF THE EPISODE OF ISFANDIĀR

(a) ISFANDIĀR'S WRATH : ACHILLES AND  
ISFANDIĀR COMPARED

As we have seen, the accumulation of legends belonging to different ages around the person of

Isfandiār has succeeded in rendering his episode the culminating point of the *Shāhnāmah*, and has given the world a series of literary scenes and descriptions of the greatest beauty, matched only in the world's greatest classics. And, after having studied the "riddle of Isfandiār" for so long, we might now regale our minds with a few of the literary beauties, which abound in that hero's episode in the great epic. Who, for example, is not stirred with emotion, when the minister, Jāmāsp, goes on an embassy to seek the help of Isfandiār in his prison, at a time, when the Iranian forces were in the direst peril? Jāmāsp tries in vain to require him to take up arms on behalf of Irān by reminding the hero of the fate of his own sisters, of his grandfather and other notable Iranians. It is only when the death of Farshidward, his favourite brother, is mentioned that Isfandiār rushes to arms, with such eagerness that he does not wait for the blacksmith to strike off his fetters but snaps them with his own matchless strength:

چو آواز دادش ز فرشید ورد      رُخش کشت برخون دول پرزورد

Who is not reminded by this of the embassy of Phoenix, Ulysses and Ajax to the tent of Achilles in order to move him to a reconciliation? Achilles however was not to be moved by entreaties, for

"Fixed is his wrath, unconquered is his pride;  
 "He slight's thy friendship, thy proposals scorns,  
 "And, thus implored, with fiercer fury burns,  
 "To save our army, and our fleets to free,  
 Is not his care" (*Iliad*, Book IX).

But the moment Achilles learns that Patroclus is dead, he is anxious to rush into battle at once to avenge his friend.

“ Me Agamemnon urged to deadly hate ;  
 “ Tis past—I quell it ; I resign to fate,  
 “ Yes—I will meet the murderer of my friend,  
 “ Or, if the gods ordain it, meet my end

\* \* \*

“ Let me this instant, rush into the fields,  
 “ And reap what glory life’s short harvest  
 yields ” (*Iliad*, Book XVIII).

And, indeed, when we compare Achilles with Isfandiār, we find quite a number of striking analogies. Both heroes are types of youth, grace and matchless valour, foredoomed to premature death. For both, the instruments of their death have been forged in advance by the Fates—“ the arrow of the Gaz tree ” (تیرک) for Isfandiār, and the arrow of Paris for Achilles. For, each hero has but one part of his body that is vulnerable—the eyes of Isfandiār and the heels of Achilles. Both possessed heavenly panoplies; that of Achilles was made by Vulcan, while that of Isfandiār was from the hands of the prophet Zoroaster :

مر او را زره آنکه اندر براست      هم از دست زردشت پیغبر است

Each of the two heroes has an old father at home and a tender mother warning him in vain against the march of Fate. Each has but one beloved friend at his side, whether in battle or at the festive-table—Patroclus in one case and Peshotan in the other. It is

when we piece together these numerous parallels, that we discover how well Isfandīār has been cast in the true mould of ancient Aryan mythology.

Then, again, we note the masterly skill with which Firdausi analyses the psychology of both Rustam and Isfandīār. Rustam is torn by his feelings, emotions and principles—for, should he yield to Isfandīār, he has to surrender the fame won over a long lifetime of heroism. On the other hand, if he fights the younger hero, he inflicts a grievous wound on Irān and exposes himself to an early death and perhaps to perdition. But, from the first, the old warrior makes the right choice and prefers death to ignominy:

بنده راو گر کشندم روانست مرا نه باید که تن مرگ دست

On that ground, Rustam declines to agree with his father's suggestions to surrender to Isfandīār and to save Seïstan the horror that would follow, and did follow, such a war.

In the same spirit as old Zal, Thetis salutes her son in the Iliad :

" Ah then, I see thee dying, see thee dead !

" When Hector falls thou diest "

Only to receive the answer of Achilles " Let Hector die, and let me fall ! "

The mind of Isfandīār too experiences a great struggle between his respect and admiration for the old champion of Irān, who had won his honours and possessions from the age of Kai Khusrau, and his own keen desire to secure the crown of Irān by overcoming Rustam.

## (b) THE BATTLE ROYAL

We note also that in the episode of Rustam and Isfandiār, the matter is carried to its proper and legitimate culmination—a titanic and mortal combat between two great heroes. It is the great merit of the *Iliad* that it reaches that true culmination in the encounter between Achilles and Hector. In the “*Paradise Lost*”, on the other hand, we are disappointed when the Archangel Michael and Satan fail to cross swords after hurling defiance at each other. Similarly, in some of the episodes of the *Shāhnāme*, the culminating point of a struggle is avoided for one reason or another. Thus Dahāk yields rather tamely to Feridun, after the scene has been set elaborately for a resounding fight. Nor does the *Shāhnāme* imitate the *Avesta* in giving us a description of a personal combat of a worthy character between Kai Khusrau and Afrāsiyāb. In the *Abān Yasht*, we are made to feel what such a giant combat would have been, with the Turanian King “fiercely striving against me (Kai Khasrau) on horseback” (sec. 50). Meanwhile Firdausi makes us some amends by depicting for us a personal battle between the two elderly heroes, Gudarz and Piran, which is the acme and the settlement of the long vendetta between the clans or families of the two protagonists. At last, in the battle royal between Isfandiār and Rustam, our expectations are more than fulfilled, even though such expectations run high. For, on one side, is Rustam—with the glory and traditions of his hundred victories of yore, while on the other, figures Isfandiār represent-

ing the whole military might of Irān in its palmyest days. Every weapon of war is utilized to the utmost and every arrow of Isfandīār finds its mark on Rustam, until the latter is fairly driven from the field, confessing that Isfandīār is indeed the invulnerable champion:

چو تیر لر کف شمرسته شدی      تن رستم و رخسار خسته شدی  
بد و تیر رستم یادم بکار      فرومعد رستم ازان کارزار  
بگفت آنگهی رستم زدم دایر      که روئین تست این بد اسفندیار

Even so, Sir Lancelot discovers and admits the marvellous power of Sir Gawain, who could hold his strength in a battle by noontide. That is a characteristic feature of the work of the great minstrels, when describing great fights like these. Elchasi gives no advantage to Isfandīār in the early stages, and while the combat is still waged with the sword and the mace. But in the later stages, especially after Isfandīār hears of the death of his son, he is lashed into fury, and bestirs himself to make a valiant effort with the bow and arrow, so that the world assumes a fearful aspect for Rustam:

دل اسفندیار اندوان تنگ کرد      بروهای چهرش پر آژدک کرد  
برنگ طبرخون شدی این جهان      شدی آفتاب از نهیبش نهان  
چو او دست بردی به تیر و کمان      رستی کسی از شست او بیگمان  
همی ناخست برگردش اسفندیار      نیامد برو تیر رستم بکار

But, apart from this poetic arrangement of the phases of the fight, we note how well the two heroes have been made to represent the characteristic merits

of the nationality of each of them in war. We know, for instance, that the Iranians in general (and the Parthians in particular) were experts in the use of the bow and arrow. Isfandiār is accordingly made to win the combat by galloping round his foe, pouring in arrows on him in the true Parthian fashion. On the other hand, the hardy mountaineer of Seistan—though not known for skill in archery—was not to be easily overcome in a fight with sword and spear, and could always take refuge in his hills if defeated in fight. Accordingly, Firdausi makes Rustam hold his own, while the fight was an affair of sword and spear, and take refuge in a hill when overmatched at bow and arrow. For aught we know, the combat in the epic might be a poetical description of a real campaign, in which the men of Sakistan were overcome by superior Iranian archery and had to seek refuge in their native hills.

(c) RUSTAM'S APOSTROPHE TO HIS PANOPLY

Next to the combat, as regards martial interest and emotion, comes the apostrophe or address of Rustam to his warlike panoply. If Homer has given us, in the Eighteenth Book of *Iliad*, a splendid description of the new arms and shield forged for Achilles by Vulcan who :

“forges most envied arms, the gaze  
of wondering ages and the world's amaze !”

The emotions of Achilles on receiving this new suit of armour are described admirably too :

"Unmoved the hero kindles at the show,  
 "And feels with rage divine his bosom glow ;  
 "From his fierce eyeballs living flames expire,  
 "And flash incessant like a stream of fire :  
 "He turns the radiant gift, and feeds his mind,  
 "On all the immortal artist had designed."

But, Achilles shows little interest in, or affection for, the older suit of armour or for the new one either. It is Firdausi who is to describe for us the emotion that an old warrior feels for the arms and armour, which have carried him through many a battle that were fought long ago. Thus Rustam, the hero of a hundred fights, sighs when he visits his armoury and adjures his armour to be firm and strong and to defend successfully the person and honour of its owner. For, a combat is coming on, when two raging tigers like Isfandiār and himself are to encounter each other—both equally brave and resolved to fight to a finish. The hero adds that he has a right to expect good service from his arms and armour alike, since they have enjoyed rest from strife for such a long period :

چو دستم سلیح فبردي بدید      یکی باد سرد از جگر برکشید  
 چنین گفت کای جوئن کارزار      بر آسودی از جنگ یک روزگار  
 کنون کاریش آمدت سغت باش      بهر کار پیراهن بخت باش  
 چنین رزمگاهی که غزان دوشیر      بجنک اندر آیند هر دودلیر

(d) RUSTAM AT ISFANDIĀR'S BANQUET

In Homer, there are quite a number of descriptions of royal banquets, which form a welcome change

to military events, and form in themselves a line of artistic poesy. In the ninth book of Iliad, we have a fine picture of a banquet, at which Achilles presided as the host and :

“ Each portion parts and orders every rite ”.

In the eleventh book, Nestor entertains Patroclus at what might be now called a wine-party ; while the seventh book closes with the scene of whole armies feasting. Firdausi has given us only one great banquet-scene, where Rustam is the guest of Isfandiār ; but the poetic and, let us add the realistic, description is worthy of an occasion, that is graced by such a guest. In the Iliad, we have a great display of good cheer at the table of Achilles :

“ Patroclus, o’er the blazing fire

“ Heaps in a brazen vase three chins entire :

“ The brazen vase Automedon sustains

“ Which flesh of porket, sheep and goat contains ”.

As regards drinks, too, Homer gives a fair range of choice, for the cup-bearer

“ pours a large portion of the Pramnian wine ”.

On other occasions we hear :

“ Of fragrant wines the rich Eunoeus sent

“ A thousand measures to the royal tent.”

But the board of Isfandiār has to be much more lavishly spread and the wines have to be more potent, too, for Rustam is no ordinary guest. Homer’s maxim is good on all ordinary occasions that :

“ Each indulging in the social feast

“ His thirst and hunger soberly repressed.”

But though Isfandiār, Peshotan and Bahman follow this safe rule, Rustam is a magnificent feaster; and, at the great banquet, Isfandiār and his nobles have to be constantly busy plating meats before Rustam, who does full justice to all of them and, in doing so, surprises the temperate Iranian chiefs.

یل ستمیز و بلان یکرمه نه دد در پیش خویش بره

Like Parzival, "he astonishes every one by his enormous appetite: he eats as if he would fill a manger." So does Rustam insist that Isfandiār's cup-bearer should add no water to the wine:

نه تن چنین است و بروز که برخون به آبت نباید یاز

The result is that by the time the feast is over, Rustam's face is redly with the glow of wine; and he is in the proper mood at last to take up the challenge of Isfandiār. He does this in the style worthy of a warrior, employing an imagery, which is not even in the great epics of the world. He reminds Isfandiār that the latter has persistently spurned Rustam's generous and sincere offers of princely entertainment. Well, then, Rustam will treat him to another sort of hospitality—hospitality dealt out with the mace, and with the host riding on the Rakhsh at full gallop:

بدو گفت رستم که ای ز بجوی ترا گر چنین آمدست آرزوی  
ترا برنگ دخت مهمان کنم بگرو بگویال درمان کنم

Thus, at last, the discourtesy that Isfandiār manifested in various ways has driven Rustam into a mood for fighting to the finish, cost what it may. And here Firdausi shows a power of subtle discrimination in

delineating the contrasted psychology of the two heroes. Isfandiār—like the youth that he is—is described as in the martial mood from the start, and he leaves no method untried to drive Rustam into the same fiery mood. But Firdausi shows his judgment and his knowledge of human nature by making the old loyal warrior long resist such efforts. His host may abuse his position by not honouring his invitation to the aged hero, he might disparage Rustam's ancestry, he might even deny Rustam that seat of honour at the table to which the latter had been long accustomed. In spite of all these deliberate insults, Rustam does his duty in attempting to dissuade the younger champion from entering on the fatal combat. At last, however, even the great patience of the old warrior is exhausted and, as we have seen, he ends by heartily responding to the challenge of Isfandiār. Thenceforward his resolve is fixed; and neither the entreaties of his father Zāl nor the earnest warnings of the sage Simurgh avail anything. The poetic power of Firdausi has now full scope, and it shines more and more as the tumult in the mind of his favourite hero, Rustam, increases. With a surprising vision of the old hero's new mentality, Firdausi makes Rustam turn back as soon as he has left the banqueting hall or rather royal tent and give vent to his furious thoughts in a new apostrophe. And once Rustam begins to think aloud, he scorns to conceal his real sentiments. Addressing the royal tent, he recalls the names of the many eminent kings that it had once harboured, and contrasts with their many

eminent qualities the unworthy nature of its present occupant. He cares not if even Isfandiar himself is listening to his apostrophe. Happy, he said, was the tent in the days of just and gracious monarchs like Feridun and Minuchiher, Kai Qubad and Kai Khosrau. But evil days have supervened when it has had to receive unworthy occupants like Gushtasp and his son:

چو رستم بیمد ز پرده سرای	زمانی همی بود بر در بیای
بگر یاس گفت ای سرای امید	ختک روز کاندر تو بد جشید
بگام فریدون همایون بدی	زمان منوچهر میمون بدی
خجسته بدی درگاه کیقباد	کز و گشت گیتی همه پرزاد
همایون بدی گاه کاوس کی	همان روز کیخسرو نیک لی
درفر همی بر تو اکنون بیست	که بر تخت توان سزائی نشست

This storm of indignation in the bosom of the aged hero lasts all through the great fight, and finds a final expression in an exclamation of ferocious satisfaction and exultation, when the wounded Isfandiar was falling from his saddle. Was this, he says, the hero who boasted of his invulnerable body? Was it for the mighty archer who had riddled Rustam's body by his flights of arrows to reel in his saddle when hit but by a single arrow?

تو آنی که گفتی که روئین تم	بلند آسمان بر زمین بر زم
من از تو صد و شصت تیر خدنگ	بخوردم نتالیدم از نام و تنگ
بیک تیر برگشتی از کارزار	بخفتی برین باره نامدار
بخوردی یکی چو به تیر گزین	نهادهی سرخویش بر پیش زین

But soon there came a revulsion. Rustam has now a clear perception not only of the might of

Isfandiār but of his unfortunate position in being urged on by an intriguing and selfish father to fight Rustam—Rustam who relied not only on his own matchless strength but on the supernatural agency of Simurgh. It is the triumph of Firdausi's genius to depict this great revulsion of feeling and to compel Rustam to make his *amende honorable* to Isfandiār, acknowledging him to be the mightiest warrior, Rustam had ever encountered, and admitting that he himself was only a tool of the fates in bringing about the fall of Isfandiār :

که تا من بمردی کمر بسته ام	همی رزم گردنکشان جسته ام
سواری ندیدم چو اسفندیار	ز ره دار و با جوشن کارزار
چو بیچاره برگشتم از جنگ اوی	بدیدم کان و برو چنگ اوی
زمان و را در کان ساختم	چو روزش سر آمد بینداختم
کراو را همی بخت یار آمدی	مرا تیر کز کی بکار آمدی

Such are some of the poetic beauties of the episode of Isfandiār. His poetic glory and greatness will not suffer even when account is taken of the transfer of other heroes' exploits to him by the bards. For, his epic stature is built up, like that of Achilles, out of a great group of romantic ideals which will ever appeal to humanity. Isfandiār and Achilles will ever stand for embodiments of the highest youthful valour and aspiration, of youthful affection for friends, and of youth's ambition to live great—if short—lives. An artistic fusion of such motifs by the hands of great masters of poesy can never grow stale as long as men can appreciate poetic merit and heroic adventure.

## VI

### THE ZAMYĀD YASHT AND THE IRANIAN EPIC. (THE CULT OF THE ARYANS)

Our task in this study is to investigate the essential unity of the epic tradition of Irān, which was first presented in its main outlines by the Zamyād Yasht, and which was finally developed with marvellous consistency by Firdausi. We shall see how many distinguishing features the Shāhnāmeḥ has in common with that Yasht. There is, for one thing, the same mixture of historical and epic treatment; hence, both the Shāhnāmeḥ and the Yasht might be described as partly epic and partly history. The main and central thread followed by both works is the same—the transfer of the Royal Glory (*Īvareñ*) from one hero and dynasty of the Aryan race to others. Such transfers secure a succession of Divine Kings or Super-men to carry on the parallel tasks of the maintenance of the Aryan race and the Iranian throne against the “havocking hordes of Turan,” as well as of the progressive betterment of the world. The Divine Right of the legitimate Kings of the Aryan race forms a corollary of this basic idea. In the third place, the history of ancient Irān is divided, both in the epic and in the Yasht, into three well-marked epochs. First comes the *Urgeschichte* of an age when Turanian foes were as yet unknown—an age of which the heroes are Yima, Thraetaona and Keresāspa. Then follows a period of which the main

features consisted of the destructive activities of the Turanian King Frangrasyān. Finally, in both our authorities, these activities were at first circumscribed by the rise of the Kavi dynasty, and then terminated by the vigour of Husravah—the greatest of these princes. Of course, there are differences between the Epic and the Yasht, but these refer more to the range of treatment than to the spirit or to the *Weltanschauung*. While the Shāhnāme has to carry on the history of the Royal Glory over a much larger period than the Yasht, it consistently follows the principles laid down by the Yasht, as we shall see. Firdausi has also to omit from his canvass the war between the gods and the demons for the Royal Glory so admirably described in section VIII of the Zamyād Yasht.

#### THE ZAMYĀD YASHT AS A BIRD'S EYE-VIEW OF WORLD-HISTORY

The task of the historical envisagement of the world is taken up by Zamyād Yasht, but from a different point of view. The history of the universe, as conceived of by the writers about the four cosmological periods, is written from a purely ethical and spiritual standpoint. The only human personages that figure in it are the "primal man" (Gayomart) and Zarathushtra. But the Zamyād Yasht describes the fortunes of "the Glory that belongs to the Aryan nations, born and unborn"; it deals in a glorified form with the history of the Aryan race which, as the rightful possessor of this Glory, has the title to the

sovereignty of the world. True, various determined efforts are made—notably by the Turanian race—to deprive the Aryans of this Glory, but those attempts have been foiled.

Some masters of history have attempted to give a comprehensive view of their subject by emphasising the importance of some particular aspect of it, and viewing all history from it as from a central point of vantage. Thus Mommsen would subsume the greater part of the history of the world into a duel between the East and the West, beginning with the invasion of Europe by the Achæmenides and the invasion of Asia by Alexander the Great. In a similar vein, the Zamyād Yasht would make the struggle between the Aryan and the Turanian the central theme of the world's history. And who, after making a comprehensive study of history, can deny the truth or importance of such a representation? Whether we consider the march of the Indo-Aryans to have lain over the Caucasus (as Hirt has put it), or whether their old home was Central Asia (as Eduard Meyer contended), they must have suffered in either case from the hostility and pressure of the Turanian races. If with O. Schrader, we regard the North and the North-western shores of the Black Sea as the original Aryan home, we see how and why the Zamyād Yasht should regard the Turanian as the great foe of the Aryans (Cf. Otto Schrader, *Die Indo-Germanen*, pp. 127-8). For there lay the Altaian and the Finnish-Ugrian races on the north of the Aryan march thus threatening constantly to hem the

Aryan in.

The great struggles of the Aryan and the Semite were yet to come: and the points of contact of the Aryan race were so far all with the Finno-Ugrian and the Altaian races. This is shown by the science of Comparative Philology, which shows the mutual influence of the languages of these races (Cf. Feist, *Kultur, Ausbreitung und Herkunft der Indo-Germanen*, pp. 520-524).

And indeed those who composed, or edited, the Zamyād Yasht not only gave an account of the struggle between the Aryans and the Turanians in their own and past ages, but their treatment was symbolical of over a thousand years of succeeding history. Thus, for over a thousand years, the Altaians subjugated and tyrannized over the Slavs; while the Mongolians of Chengiz Khan and Tamerlane spread devastation over Irān, Asia Minor and Russia alike and repeatedly. The composers of the Zamyād Yasht were true prophets of the future conflicts between the Aryan and the Northern Non-Aryan races.

We thus see that the Zamyād Yasht is by no means an unimportant source for the history and vicissitudes of the Aryan race. From this point of view, we can consider the significance of the geographical names mentioned in the Yasht. It is obvious, for instance, from verses 51 and 57-63, that the glory of the Iranian or Aryan race was specially connected with the great Sea Vourukasha, for the Turanian

champion sought to seize it there. This sea has been identified with the Black Sea by some writers, and with the Caspian by others. This suits very well the theory, which would place the original home of the Aryans somewhere on the Black Sea. According to the Yasht, again, there were several occasions when the glory of the Aryans had to take refuge from Turanian invaders successively in these inlets of the great sea in the lake Husravah, in the lake Vamnazdan and in the water that is called Awz-dānva (sections 56, 59 and 62). It is obvious from this that, at times, the Aryan race was on the defensive, and various branches of the sea or lakes became the refuges of the race. This shows how important from the earliest ages the sea has been in the history of races. The Turanian invaders are represented as being bent to "defile all corn and drinks as to greatness, goodness and firmness." This is a very fair account of the tactics of old Altai and Mongolian invaders. It is very significant that in such an old document as Zamyād Yasht, we note a recognition of the growth of sea-power in history.

Let us now single out among the places, noted by the Zamyād Yasht, two successive foci of Aryan power. In verse 56, we hear of lake Husravah as one seat of the Glory of Aryans; and Bundahish XXII, 8 informs us that this lake was within some leagues of the Chēchast lake, the scene of the triumph of Kai Khusrau over the Turanian Afrāsiyāb. The last of the four Aryan centres is "where lies lake Kāsava along with the Haetumant river." These two foci must have

been of great importance in the history of the Aryans. For, it is in the region of lakes Husravah and Chēchast, that the Aryan march to East would be interrupted by the movement of Turanian invaders coming from north of the Caucasus by the famous pass of Darial. It was natural, that there one great representative of the Aryans, King Kai Khusrau, should meet and repel the Turanian champion Afrāsiyāb. The descriptions of the Yashts and of the Shāhnāmeḥ about the successes of Iranians over Turanians in this region have, as their best commentary, the accounts of Rostovtzeff and other writers about the spread of Iranian influence—both cultural and political—in the areas adjoining the Caucasus and the Black Sea. We also note how the Sarmatians, the Alans and similar nomadic tribes in this area have had an Iranian ethnology. The other focus of Aryan power, mentioned in the Zamyād Yasht, is the region around the lake Kāsava (Seistān). Here again, we have a point at which the line of Aryan march towards the East was intersected by the Turanian drive towards the South. Here, again, protected by the rivers, lakes and mountains, the Aryan race set up a great settlement and kingdom. In the opinion of scholars like Christensen (cf. *Die Iranier*, pp. 217-218), the East Iranian monarchy of Kaiānides flourished here between B. C. 900 and 775. The royal line of older Kavis ended with Kai Khusrau ; for, though we know the name of his son, Akhrura, he is not designated as Kavi. So obvious and great was the importance of the Kāsava

region in Iranian history that the learned historian, Dr. Herzfeld, would make this region the birth-place of Zoroastrianism.

### THE COURSE OF ARYAN MIGRATIONS

The Aryan race has been beset by the Turanian, whichever way the former moved. If in the post-glacial epoch, the waters of the Aral-Caspian Sea receded, providing new lands for settlement, there was a parallel movement of the Proto-nordics and the Proto-Turanian for these areas (Eickstedt, *Rassenkunde und Rassenengeschichte*, p. 278). For the latter streamed from their Thien Shan home to occupy lands, which later on were to become Turan and the Tarim basin (Id. 279). Towards the South, the Turanian followed hard on the heels of the Kassite and the Mede, and one may say that the Turanian had threatened Iran for some thousands of years and had often ruthlessly overrun it. It was no alleviation of the lot of the Iranian that the Turanian herds carried along with them in their course some Indo-Germanic sections. That only increased the momentum of the Northern attacks. To withstand these invasions was the great ambition of the mightiest champions of the Iranians. Thus, we find King Haoshyangha praying that he may be able to "smite two-thirds of the Daevas of Mazana" (*Ābān Yasht*, verse 22). "The valiant warrior Tusa" also worshipped and asked the boon from the back of his horse that "I may smite of the Turanian people their

fifties and their hundreds, their hundreds and their thousands, their thousands and their tens of thousands, their tens of thousands and their myriads of myriads" (*Ib.* section 54). Another Iranian hero Vistauru, son of Naotara, could boast of having "smitten as many of the worshippers of the Daevas as the hairs I bear on my head" (*Ib.* section 77). Above all, was it not against the Turanians that King Kai Khusrau united the hosts and nations of Turan? But even so, he could express quite justifiable apprehensions of the power of "the murderer who now is fiercely striving against me on horseback." Nor did even the resounding triumphs of Kai Khusrau decide the long struggle. For generations later we find "the valiant Kavi Vishtāspa and Zairi-Vairi who fight on horseback" threatened with a new Turanian horde, which aspired to make a mighty slaughter among the Aryans (*Ib.* sec. 117).

But the hordes from the "Turanian storm-centre" did not content themselves by falling on Irān from its North-eastern flank. They were pressing also due West against Europe. As Eickstedt observes, the drying of the Aralo-Caspian-Black Sea opened new doors to the Turanians towards Europe, and passing through these, they drove out some Nordics who had settled in South Russia (*Ib.* 281-2). From thence also they could strike at Irān; and we read of Ashavazdah, the Armenian prince, praying that "we may overcome the assemblers of the Turanian Danus—Kara Asbana and Vara Asbana—and the most

mighty Durae Kaeta in the battles of this world." (Ābān Yasht, section 72). This road through South Russia was followed later on by new Turanian hordes also—the Avars, the Huns and the Peshenegs; while the road due South was followed by other Turanians—Huns, Sakas, Turuskas, Kushāns and Epththalites. Hence the importance of the regions round the lakes Chēchasta and Kāsiwa in the historical portions of the Yashts.

The number of hypotheses advanced regarding the original home of the Aryans (or Indo-Germans) might at first sight appear bewildering. Different ethnologists have assigned different localities for this first home, as remote from each other as Scandinavia, Germany and North France, on the one hand, and the Balkans, South Russia, Anatolia, Iran and Central Asia, on the other. Eickstedt would reconcile all these suppositions by arguing that the lines joining all these points represent so many lines of march of the Aryan race in the course of centuries (Eickstedt, *op. cit.* p. 461). Curiously enough, these eastern and southern lines of Aryan advance are almost the same as the western and southern lines of advance of the Turanians. Hence, the inevitable conflict of the two races over a wide area. It is in the light of this wide and straggling lines of Aryan and Turanian advance, that we have to interpret the references in the Zamyād Yasht. It emphasises in the main the Sea Vouru-Kasha, the lakes surrounding it and the valley of the Helmand (Seistān) as the

leading Aryan settlements within its ken. By the sea Vouru-Kasha, it very probably implies the Aral-Caspian-Black Sea area where the biggest and earliest conflict between the Aryan and the Turanian must have naturally taken place. That area was, according to the Yasht, the home of the Aryan glory, whence the Turanian King Afrāsiyāb strove to dislodge it. In the Yasht, he is represented as flinging himself in that ocean, which might be interpreted as describing, not only cavalry raids all about the shores of the ocean (including North Irān and the Caucasus country), but perhaps also naval expeditions of some sort. South of that great watery expanse lay the Armenian lakes, where the Avesta places the locality in which King Kai Khusrau terminated the career of Afrāsiyāb. Obviously, this implies some signal success of that lord of Irān, which put an end for a long period to the raids of the Turanians across the Caucasus.

#### CAUSES OF ARYAN MIGRATIONS

Thus, the Zamyād Yasht is of high value to students of Ethnology. We have seen how the Yasht furnishes us with some indications of the course of the march of the Aryans towards the East. Does it, in addition, give us any suggestions as regards the *causes of the migrations* of the Iranian branch of the Indo-Germanic race? There appear to be some references to that subject in sections 56-59 and 62. There we read of a "defiling of all corn and liquors, as to greatness, goodness and fairness", as well as to a

depopulation of the country—calamities which are attributed to the activity of the Turanians under Afrāsiyāh. These statements are supplemented by the accounts furnished by the Bundahish XXI, 6, as well as by the historian Hamak of Isfahan, about the filling up or conducting away of the rivers by Afrāsiyāh. That the Yasht itself envisages a great loss of Aryan population at a certain epoch, is obvious from the fact that it invokes, against the desolation caused by the Turanians, the beneficent activity of Ahura Mazda "ever eager to create new creatures" (s. 78). In the Yasht also, we read of these different arms of the sea Vouru-Kasha being formed at the time, the lakes called Husravah, Vanchazdāu and Awz-dānva. Somehow the formation of these lakes must have benefited "the Aryan nations", spoken of by the Yasht, since the Royal Glory is said to have "changed its seat", transferring itself to these lakes.

To summarize, then, the Zamyād Yasht emphasises the fact that, in the epoch before the formation of the Kavi or Kaya dynasty, there was in the first place a *considerable measure of depopulation in "the Aryan nations", due to the drying up and turning away of rivers* of the country till then occupied by them. In the second place, it refers to the formation of some large lakes and bodies of water in the region round the sea Vouru-Kasha. Finally it refers to the rise of the Kavi dynasty in the well-watered regions "where lies lake Kāsava along with the Haetumant river, where stands

Mount Ushidhau surrounded by waters" (s. 66).

This description is very significant historically, for history tells us that in many cases migration of races have been caused by the climate becoming moist or dry, by the increase or diminution of productivity of particular areas. The fortunes of races have been profoundly influenced by alterations of physical conditions very similar to those mentioned in the Yasht. Thus, an eminent geographer like Mr. Ellsworth Huntington attributes the great early migrations between Europe and Asia to the "alternate expansion and contraction of the ice-covered area of Europe on the one hand, and of the deserts of Asia and Africa on the other" (*The Pulse of Progress*, p. 166). Mr. Huntington points to the historical importance of two periods of droughts culminating about 1700 or 1750 B. C. and again between 1300 and 1200 B. C. The former period of aridity (*ib.* p. 125) was, according to him, coeval with the migration of the Kassite Aryans into Media, Elam and Babylonia, while another section of the Aryans, the Mitanni, founded a kingdom in Northern Mesopotamia. Similarly, Mr. C. E. P. Brooks observes in his *Evolution of Climate* how, before this period of aridity, there was probably "a moist maritime phase in Central and Eastern Europe and probably also in Asia," so that "these lands had become extensively peopled by neolithic nomads of Aryan and Semitic races". As the climate became drier, the land was unable to support such large nomadic population, and there was a great outburst of

raiding and conquering expeditions directed southwards and westwards, resulting in a succession of empires in the rich Mesopotamian regions and neighbouring countries, which form the beginnings of our history".

Taking our clue from these historical and geographical dates, we might interpret the statements in the Zamyād Yasht. It may be that with the period of drought—more likely in the 17th than in the 12th century B. C., some of the "Aryan nations" moved on to a new centre of power in the valley of the Helmund. And just as the Mitanni and the Kassites founded Empires in the valley of the Euphrates and Tigris, so the Kavi princes with their followers founded the Aryan kingdoms in Seistān, on the one hand, and on the lake Chēchasta, on the other. In our own days, writers on "the Geographical basis of History" like Ellsworth Huntington are emphasising the connection between desiccation and the downfall of Empires, as well as that between the rise of great kingdoms and well-watered regions. *The Zamyād Yasht is the first human document which emphasises this historical and geographical theory, and it may be said to be the great locus classicus for that view.* The Yashts connect the great monarchy of Kai Khusrau with lake Chēchasta, the rise of Kayani prosperity with the waters of lake Kāsava and the river Haetumant (Helmund) in Seistān. The later golden age of King Vishtāspa and Zairi-vairi is also connected in the Avesta with the river Dāitya and the lake Frazdānava (Ābān Yasht, sections

108 and 112). The opposing Turanian kingdom, both of Arejataspa and Afrāsiyāb, is connected with the sea Vouru-Kasha (*Ib.* section 116). The decline of the Iranian power between the age of Thraetona and that of the Kayanians was probably connected with the drying up of rivers (section 58). Such an anticipation of scientific views in the age of the Yashts is a fact, which deserves to be noted as an instance of the historical insight of the Iranian genius.

The *formation of the great lakes mentioned in the Zamyād Yasht*, as occurring in the region of the Vouru-Kasha, has also important parallels and interpretations in the history of Geography. Thus, Prince Krapotkin has drawn attention to a former great extension of the sea of Aral (Eickstedt, *op. cit.* p. 250 and Krapotkin, *The Desiccation of Eur-Asia*, in *Geogr. Journal*, XXIII, 722-741, 1904). Eickstedt has also mentioned how geologists have proved beyond question the connection of the sea of Aral with the Caspian Sea and the Black Sea, though he doubts the proposed connection between the Aral Sea and the Balkash Lake. There has thus been a connection between the fluctuations, which have taken place in the main inland seas or lakes; and we know how the Caspian Sea, the lakes of Seistān, and the lakes of Armenia have fluctuated in size in the same fashion (cf. Ellsworth Huntington, *Pulse of Asia*, p. 356), owing to changes of climate. Now it is a remarkable fact that the Yasht mentions just these great lakes as the successive centres of Iranian power. It mentions the great Seistān Lake.

connecting the waters of lake Kāsava (as the lake of Seistān was then called) with the seat of power of the seven kings of the Kayanian dynasty beginning with Kavi Kavāta and ending with Kavi Šyavarshana. Obviously, the widening waters of Seistān in those days made possible an expansion of the habitable area of that part of ancient Iran under the Kings, mentioned in the Yasht. Again, throughout the Avesta, the glory of King Husravah (Kai Khusrau) is connected with lake Chēchasta—which is a large unit of the Armenian system of lakes mentioned by Ellsworth Huntington. As Kavi Husravah's reign falls immediately after that of the seven kings mentioned above, we can take it that the prosperity of the Kayanian race as a whole depended on the expansion of the well-watered area in these two places at the same period. For the prosperous conditions of Seistān region, in early days, we have not only authority of Ellsworth Huntington, but that of other geographers whom he quotes. Thus, in the days of Alexander, his general Krateros could march his army across the southern end of Dasht-i-Lut to Narmashir. As to this, Mr. O. B. St. John observes that "it would certainly puzzle a Krateros nowadays to march his elephants and heavy baggage from the Helmund to Narmashir, but there is every reason to suppose that part of Persia to have been far better populated and better watered than it is at present." Vredenburg also mentions that perennial springs, now everywhere dried up, must have existed in all the ravines, where these remains (of terraced

fields) are found, which show how much greater the rainfall must have been formerly. The statements in the Yasht about the glorious regime of the Kayani Kings are corroborated "by the mighty cities of the dead which crowd Seistan". The formation of the three great inlets of water, which the Yasht emphasises, is very probably connected with the enlargement and higher level of the Caspian Sea in the early historic age. Various geographical authorities speak of the higher level of the Caspian Sea in earlier ages and of its larger size. According to Humboldt, even up to the Middle Ages "the Scythian gulf of the Caspian was much more extended to the East than in our day." Such changes in the relative size of the gulfs of the Caspian Sea explain the statement in the Yasht about formation of lakes and inlets of the Sea.

The suspicion expressed in the Zamyād Yasht, that the drying up of rivers was the malicious act of Turanians can also be accounted for on historical ground. As the East of Irān was going through the process of desiccation and progressive aridity, the agricultural population, so far as it was mobile, had to betake itself either towards the western portions of Irān or towards the Indian frontier. At the same time, the gap thus formed was filled by the northern invaders from Turan. Thus, an association of ideas was formed in the mind of the Iranian between the process of expanding aridity and the Turanian race (cf. Eickstedt, *op. cit.* p. 173). Even in the earliest period, the recession of the Aralo-Caspian waters was

followed by the advent of the Proto-Turanians (*Ib.* p. 278), and here must have begun the age-long association between aridity and the arrival of the Turanians. Even in the Middle Ages, it used to be said that vegetation ceases to grow on the ground, which the horse of the Mongol or the Turk has trodden—a legend, which finds its first written expression in the Yashts.

#### PROF. HERZFELD'S THEORIES ABOUT THE YASHT

We might now proceed to consider some views advanced by the learned Prof. Herzfeld in his very interesting study of the Zamyād Yasht in the *Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran*, Band VI, Heft 1-2, December 1933. It need hardly be said that the views of that scholar are always thought-provoking and stimulating, even when one has not the pleasure of being in entire agreement with him. In our own humble opinion, the Zamyād Yasht gives a geographical sketch of the Aryan migration into Irān. On the other hand, Prof. Hertel interprets the Sea Vouru-Kasha, with its three gulfs, as only a feature of heavenly geography—corresponding probably with the Milky Way (*Ib.* p. 16). Prof. Herzfeld himself takes up a compromise position. He accepts the descriptions of the Kānsvaya or Zranka region as "topographic" (*Ib.* p. 21), but he takes the Sea Vouru-Kasha as both the Milky Way and the Ocean surrounding the Earth (*Ib.* p. 17), its three 'gulfs' being of the Caspian Sea, the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean, as understood and interpreted after the immi-

gration of Aryans into Irān. As against this interesting theory of Prof. Herzfeld, it might be pointed out that, in Ābān Yasht, we find the Sea Vouru-Kasha described as situated in or near the land of Turan, since both Arejat-aspa and Vāndaremaini offer up a sacrifice to Ābān "by the Sea Vouru-Kasha". Even if the Frangrasyān *saga* is a piece of pure mythology, as Prof. Herzfeld asserts, there can be no question about the historical character of the two opponents of Vishtāspa; for the Professor admits the historicity of the Kayani dynasty, which long preceded Vishtāspa. Thus, the sea Vouru-Kasha is to be regarded as a historical sea on whose shores once lived the Aryans (cf. the Aryan Glory "waving in the middle of the Sea Vouru-Kasha"). But, later, as the Aryans moved on further South, these shores were occupied by the Turanians. It is difficult to consider the Iranians of the Achæmenian days as regarding, say, the Mediterranean Sea, as a gulf produced by the action of the Turanians (represented by Frangrasyān)—for they well knew that no Turanians lived near that Sea (*Ib.* p. 17). Hence, one prefers to agree with Prof. Christensen in his view that Vouru-Kasha was the epithet of a well-known sea in the region formerly inhabited by the Iranians, and that there is nothing to compel us to give it a mythical significance.

A word might also be said about Prof. Herzfeld's view of the general composition of the Zamyād Yasht. According<sup>2</sup> to his ingenious, but not quite convincing, theory, sections VIII and IX of that Yasht are bits

of the Apām Napāt *saga* and the Frangrasyān *saga*, while the portions about the Kayani princes are historical (*Ib.* p. 21). As to this, it might be said that no one denies that portions of that Yasht are of very great antiquity. What has to be said is that *there is no fortuitous throwing together or collection of old myths in the Yasht* which is, indeed, "a mighty maze but not without a plan."

The composer or redactor of the Yasht sets out to give a history and indicate the course of the Aryan race in and towards Iran. How closely the course of the legendary Iranian history is followed by the Yasht can be seen by comparing the Yasht with, say, the 33rd chapter of the Iranian Bundahishn. Thus, sections V-VII of the Zamyād Yasht correspond to the *Golden Age*, which is ended with the Fall of Yima, an event which, according to the Bundahishn, closed the first millennium. Section VIII of the Yasht deals with the *affairs of the second millennium*, which is covered by the reign of Azi Dahāka, when the Glory sought refuge with Apām Napāt. In the case of Azi Dahāka, we are dealing with a demon and not with a man, and hence a demi-god like Apām Napāt has to intervene to maintain the balance. The third millennium stretched from Thraetaona to Vishtāspa. The Yasht deals with it partly in section VII and then in sections IX, X, XI and XII. Here, again, the advent of the demon Frangrasyān necessitates the introduction of supernatural machinery. In a word, it is impossible to deny that *the Yasht*

*possesses a unity and a consistent plan*, though some portions draw on an older stratum of legends and symbolism.

There remains to be noted yet another suggestion of Professors Hertel and Herzfeld about the nature of the Glory which deserves very careful consideration. Prof. Herzfeld draws attention to the *distinction between the Glory of the Aryans and the Glory of the Kavis*. The latter belongs to Ahura Mazda and is mentioned in half-historical legends. The Aryan glory idea goes back to much greater antiquity and, as Prof. Herzfeld puts it, for it Ahura Mazda struggled in vain, in section forty-sixth of the Zamyād Yasht. He also points out that different epithets are used to qualify the two kinds of Glory. Prof. Hertel too emphasises the distinction, though he concludes by observing that in the sixty-eighth section of the Yasht, the two glories—that of the Aryans and that of the Kavis—are declared to be identical (Herzfeld, *op. cit.* p. 20).

Now there can be no doubt whatever that the two kinds of Glory are mentioned in the Yasht as distinct. Probably, too, the rise of the idea of Aryan Glory was prior to that of the Glory of the Kavis. The reason for this is, that the Aryans became race-conscious long before the particular political institution of Royalty made its appearance amongst them. Nor can it be denied that at different times and in different localities, the mode of envisagement of the Glory did differ, sometimes as in the case of Kinv

Yima, the Glory was regarded as *visible* when leaving him. The idea might have been affected by different phases of political evolution of the Iranians (cf. Herzfeld, *op. cit.* p. 254).

Nevertheless, it is quite possible to exaggerate the importance of the distinction between the Aryan Glory and the Glory of the Kavis and Prof. Hertel seems to be right in asserting the *ultimate identity of the two*. He bases himself, as we have seen, on the sixty-eighth paragraph of the Zamyād Yasht and the ultimate identity goes back to the real nature of the two Glories. For, we have to note that the ultimate function of the two *Kāwariya* is identical. Thus, in the verse referred to, the highest potentiality of Kingly Glory is that it "might extinguish at once in the non-Aryan nations." Similarly in the *Āstād Yasht* (sec. 2) the Aryan Glory "d-*straps* in" non-Aryan nations." And indeed, seeing that the Kavis were only the representatives of the Aryans, there is a good deal to be said for Prof. Hertel's idea of identifying the Royal Glory and the Aryan Glory.

If, nevertheless, a case has to be made out for distinguishing the Royal Glory and the Aryan Glory, it can be done on other lines than those of Prof. Herzfeld. For, the *Ātash Niyayish* repeatedly emphasises, the *Hvarenō* of the Kavis (i.e. Royal Glory) is closely allied to *Ātar* or fire, while the Aryan Glory, is partial to the watery element. As section VIII of the Zamyād Yasht shows, *Ātar* failed to secure the Aryan Glory, since it is closely allied to the element

of water and hence easily goes to Apām Napāt. Similarly, when Frangrasyān attempts to seize it in the Vouru-Kasha Sea, the Aryan Glory takes refuge in the sea, the Glory escapes into arms of that sea—showing thus on several occasions that the watery element is congenial to it.

However, with all respect to Prof. Herzfeld, one cannot agree with his notion that “in the struggle over the *Hvarenō*, Apām Napāt secures a victory over Ahura Mazda” since the Glory was easily seized by the former (Herzfeld, *op. cit.* p. 21). The learned author puts forward this view in order to show that portions of the Zamyād Yasht are “pre-Zoroastrian and almost pre-Iranian” (*Ib.* p. 18). But the fact that the angel Apām Napāt seizes the Glory does not amount to any defeat of Ahura Mazda, since it is a member of the “Host of Heaven” who has won it. I would submit, that, if there is any possibility of such contrast of defeat and victory in the case, it is between Ātar and Apām Napāt. And yet, the contrast is at best only nominal and superficial, since both Ātar and Apām Napāt are but different forms of fire. The *Aryan* Glory goes to the latter as being, by its name, more congenial to the element of water and to its chief. On the other hand, as I have already pointed out, according to the *Ātash Niyayish*, the *Royal* Glory has a closer affinity to Ātar. As the late Dr. Jackson puts it “the essence of fire manifests itself in the form of *hvarenah*, which represents the splendour and glory of kings and priests. The doctrine of this flaming majesty has an analogy in

the Shekhina of the Jews" (*Zoroastrian Studies*, p. 57). As to Apām Napāt, Dr. Jackson notes that "later Pahlavi tradition localizes his abode in the region of the Caspian Sea." This is an additional argument for the view that Vourukasha was no mythical ocean but an actual geographical landmark on the Aryan road towards Iran.

#### THE ZAMYĀD YASHT AS EPIC IN ITSELF

It is suggested here that the Zamyād Yasht forms by itself an epic—and indeed an epic of high poetic value, and one of the earliest epics extant. Its canvass is indeed small but the theme is one of the largest and most stirring in its nature. Let us apply to that Yasht the *accepted literary standards and tests* proposed for epics by such great literary critics as Prof. W. M. Dixon, Irene Myers and R. M. Alden—recent and distinguished specialists and authorities on the subject of epics in general. The first requisite put forward by these eminent authorities is that the epic should be "a narrative organic in structure, dealing with great actions and great characters, in a style commensurate with the lordliness of its theme". Now, as regards the *unity of action and organic character of its structure*, few poems can excel or equal this Yasht. It is in fact a narration of the fortunes of Royalty and Royal Glory through the whole course of history. Its horizon is bounded, on the one hand, by the advent of the Primal Man (in the persons of Takhma Urupa and Yima) and, on the other hand, by the appearance of the Saoshyant. The scale of epic

actions is in fact equalled only by that of the Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained put together. By some, the scale might be considered to be too wide; but, if the fortunes of the Royal virtue are to be considered and described, then surely a very wide range is essential. Nor is there any agreement amongst critics as regards the dimensions and scope permitted to the epic. Some have confined it to "a single revolution of the Sun", others to "the events of a single year", while still others permit wider scope and range.

As regards *greatness of actions and characters*, the Yasht need surely fear no comparison, and it presents us with a series of victorious heroes, who signally fulfil the requirements of the epic for the introduction of such personalities. It brings in figures like those of "the bright Yima, the good shepherd", of Takhma Urupa "the well armed who ruled over the Seven Karshvares of the Earth", and Thraetaona "the most victorious of all victorious men next to Zarathushtra". These heroes are followed by "the manly-hearted Kereshāspa—he who was the sturdiest of the men of strength", and by the seven earlier Kings of the Kayān race who "were all of them brave, all of them strong, all of them healthful, all of them wise, all of them happy in their wishes, all of them powerful Kings". Here, surely, the Yasht sets up a very high heroic standard, and, what is more, states it expressly. Prof. Chadwick has remarked in his excellent work on "The Growth of Literature" (174 ff.) how rarely such standards are laid down, whether in Homeric

poems or in Irish and Welsh *saga*; and he adds that, in many old epics, "disapprobation is rarely expressed" even when the hero is at fault. Certainly, however, this was not the standpoint of this Yasht, which preserves "a dignified and fastidious tone" throughout. Wherever praise is given, the reasons for such approbation are furnished forthwith—reasons, both historical and ethical. If the highest laudation is reserved for King Husravan (Kai Khusrau), it is because he has "the righteousness of the law, the innocence of the law, the unconquerable power of the law" besides "a dominion full of splendour". On the other hand, King Afrāsiyāb, in spite of his wide dominion, is only the "Turanian ruffian Frangrasyāna". Even so, the Yasht will not deny to him the merit due to his earlier and more meritorious career of his youthful days. It is in fact one of the foremost *ethical epics* of the world. Nor does it fail to excite interest by giving details of heroic career, as in the case of Kereshāspa; but generally the heroes are sketched summarily, though in such a manner as to appeal to poetic imagination. This successful maintenance of the proper perspective is one of the great merits of the Yasht, since the vast scope of the historical range is not permitted to dwarf the individual figures, while the transitions from one great epoch to another are managed with great skill. It is worth noting how well the transitions from the wars of the supernatural powers—both good and evil—has been made through Azi Dahāka and Frangrasyāna to the great deeds of the Kayān race. For, Azi Dahāka

is envisaged not only as a human king but a super-human monster worthy to measure swords with the angel Ātar himself; while Frangrasyāna is also supposed to possess more than mortal powers, since he can dry up and divert rivers, and can also traverse oceans, to seize the Glory of the Aryan nations, forcing that Glory to seek refuge into various new inlets of the ocean. These super-human kings and champions of Evil might well remind us of the famous work of Milton, in which Satan is represented as the great dynamic character from whose agency much of the action arises. Like Milton's Satan, Azi Dahāka has great resemblance to the primal Dragon, and Frangrasyāna to the fallen angel.

We come next to the supernatural factor, that *element of magic and mystery*, which many eminent students of epics have conceived of as essential for epics. Here too, the Yasht does not disappoint us, for nearly half of it resounds with the exploits of gods and spirits, while the descriptions of these can stand comparison in many cases with those in the leading epics of the world. Thus, we read of Kereshāspa slaying the great demon Gandarewa "that was rushing with open jaws eager to destroy the living worlds" (section 41). The same hero also slays the giant Snāvidhaka, who resembles the Titans Otus and Ephialtes, who would have, as Homer narrates, shaken the dominion of Jupiter himself, had they been allowed to grow to adolescence. Snāvidhaka indeed goes much further than the Titans in his conception of upsetting the universe.

For, he intended "to bring down the Good Spirit from the shining Garonmana and to make the Evil Spirit rush up from the dreary Hell" and yoke them both to his chariot. Such heights of ambition are surely unparalleled even in the annals of Titans as narrated in Greek epics; though in Norse mythology, the gods are often hard pressed by the giants and their final encounter with their adversaries will prove disastrous to the former. We also read of an epoch when Fenrir, the wolf, will destroy the Sun. Incidentally, it might be added as an illustration of our thesis regarding the character of the Yasht that the whole epic of Kereshāspa is embodied in it and forms but a single section. It is as if, besides the Iliad, we possessed another great epic dealing with the whole range of the cycle of Greek heroic poetry.

Much of the supernatural action in the Zamyād Yasht is connected with the transfer of the Royal Glory from one hero or deity to another. Thus, the primal hero, Yima, is so amply endowed with that Glory that, on three several occasions, that Glory is transferred from him—to Mithra, to Thraetaona and to Kereshāspa in succession. The transfer takes place in a most poetic way—in the shape of a bird. This reminds us of how the Holy Spirit descended on Jesus in the shape of a dove. The Zamyād Yasht, however, wants to emphasise also the fact that greatness of endeavour is essential for the acquisition of that Glory whether by gods or men. Accordingly, the god Mithra as well as the heroes Thraetaona and Kere-

shāspa have to "seize that Glory". Similarly, when the issue of the combat between the god of fire (Ātar) and the demon Azi Dahāka remains doubtful, another deity Apām Napāt hastens "to seize it (the Glory) at once" (section 51). Obviously, a great deal of merit is required by one who desires to seize this Glory, since it "cannot be forcibly seized" or at least cannot be held for any length of time by any one who is devoid of such merit. For, we read in another section a highly poetic description of how King Vishtāspa "took her, standing round from the hands of the Hunus, and established her to sit in the middle of the world, high ruling" (section 56).

It may be safely asserted, however, that the acme of supernatural and heroic action in the Yasht is reached in the description of the combat between Ātar (the god of fire) and Azi Dahāka for the possession of the Glory. On both sides, the hosts of Good and Evil Spirits make their appearance and "fling darts most swift" (section 46) at each other. But, the narration of this general combat is soon interrupted and attention is concentrated on a single combat between two mighty champions—Ātar on the one side, and Azi Dahāka on the other. The general spirit of the battle between angels and fiends as well as the single combat will not suffer from a comparison with the similar events described in the sixth book of Milton's *Paradise Lost*, where the conflict is brought to a head in the single combat between Michael and Satan—both "fit to decide the empire of great Heaven":



that he was—could attempt to quench Ātar by the force exerted in a fierce rush ; while Ātar (fire) could respond by blazing up into a mighty conflagration, which would consume the dragon from end to end.

But, then, the question might well be asked—*why and in what sense is the Zamyād Yasht more of an epic than the other Yashts*, which also mention and describe the exploits of the heroes of old Irān to some extent ? Now, it is true, that the other Yashts deal incidentally with the exploits of various personages of Iranian history. But, in the first place, the central theme in these Yashts is not a dramatised chronicle of history in its full and continuous sequence ; they are only meant to show how, when individual heroes were in dire difficulties, some angel or deity came to their help and assisted them to scale the height of achievement. In a word, these other Yashts, though they possess some of the elements of epics, do not possess central epic themes or plots. Rather, they are the predecessors of that Faraj (فرج) literature, which flourished so extensively in mediaeval times. In the second place, the exploits of heroes are mentioned merely to glorify the particular deity, whose help has been invoked and are not grouped together by themselves, in a single perspective. In a word, the exploits in a real epic have to be so arranged as to glorify individually the super-man concerned and the deity assisting and supporting him.

## THE DIVINE KING IDEA

We have seen why the Zamyād Yasht will always be a document of special interest to the student of ethnology and of the world's epics. *To the sociologist, too, it will remain an instructive study*, because it presents a specially important phase of the notion of the Divine King, namely the last phase of that concept when it was passing over into that general idea of the Super-man which we have still with us. Indeed, it might be asserted that the strongly logical and commonsense mentality of old Irān might have been expected to take the lead in the task of the transmutation of the pre-historic notion of the Divine King into that of the Super-man. Corresponding to this, we find in the Zamyād Yasht a good few survivals of various aspects of the Divine King concept.

For one thing, we find in that Yasht various references to the important function of the Divine King in the control of the Sun, Wind and Rain (cf. Frazer, *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*, pp. 244-331 and 390). Mr. A. E. Crawley has also written about the time when "meteorological results were believed to be in the control of human rulers" (*E R E* VII, pp. 740-741). He also quotes from Mr. O'Donovan's *The Book of Rights* to illustrate "the belief among the ancient Irish that when their kings acted in conformity with the institutions of their ancestors, the seasons were favourable and that the earth yielded its fruit in abundance, but that when they violated these laws, plague, famine and

inclemency of weather were the result. In the Zamyād Yasht, the chief controller of the Sun, Wind and Rain is the "bright King Yima", "in whose reign waters and plants were undying, in whose reign there was neither cold wind nor hot wind". In his time, there was an abundance of "both riches and welfare, both fatness and flock". The Rām Yasht also says that in his reign, he made "both animals and men undying, waters and plants undrying, and the food for eating creatures never failing" (s. 16). The chief agency in this absolute control of meteorological phenomena was the Royal Glory (*Hvarəno*) which "clave to him" as long as Yima "did not begin to find delight in words of falsehood and untruth" (Zamyād Yasht, ss. 31-34). Another Divine King of Irān who controlled the Wind was Kavi Husravah (Kai Khusrau), who rode the Wind (*Vāe*), the latter being transferred into the shape of a camel. Similarly the Kavi dynasty kings had the power "to keep away hunger and death, cold and heat from living creatures" (Zamyād Yasht, s. 69). This reminds us that the Divine King was credited with functions of mystic influence, which secured proper provision of food for the nation and was indeed the symbol of fertility and general welfare (Thurnwald, *Die Menschliche Gesellschaft*, IV 170).

Another function of the Divine King was that of *destroying and slaughtering dragons*; and totemic as well as cosmological interpretations of this function have been examined by Sir James Frazer (*The Dying God*, pp. 105-112). In the Zamyād Yasht, we have

examples of Divine Kings who slaughtered dragons, in the "manly-hearted Kereshāspa" and others (s. 93). Kereshāspa indeed "killed the snake Sravara, the horse-devouring, men-devouring, yellow, poisonous snake, over which yellow poison flowed a thumb's breadth thick". It is noteworthy that the present Yasht emphasises the Divine King's function of slaughtering dragons in a unique way—unparalleled in other epic works. For, it attributes Royal Glory even to the Turanian King, when he slew the monster called "Drvāu Zainigāu"; and, yet on most occasions, it designates him as either "the Turanian ruffian" (s. 56) or as "the most crafty Turanian Frangrasyān," (ss. 58, 60, 63). The inference obviously is that the function of slaughtering the dragon or other monsters is of such importance in the notion of the Divine King that, in spite of his numerous evil traits, Frangrasyāna was recognised as a Divine King, in view of his having slaughtered the Drvāu.

The subjects of the Divine King believed themselves open to two kinds of formidable dangers. In the first place, that king might act against the spirit of time-honoured institutions, forfeit his high character and thus open a vista of famines and other calamities to his people. Secondly, owing to either old age or ill-health, the strength of the Divine King might fail and, as a result, misfortunes might crowd on his subjects. Sir James Frazer has pointed out that as a result of this idea, kings were killed at the end of a fixed

term or when their strength failed (*The Dying God*, pp. 14-130). In the Zamyād Yasht, we find kings Yima and Frangrasyān forfeiting their character of Divine King—the first on account of indulging in the “ words of falsehood and untruth ”, and the second on account of his generally iniquitous character. As regards the idea that the King, who is old or in failing strength, is best got rid of in the interests of his subjects, we have no direct dictum ; but we find that the longest reigns like those of Yima, Kāwus and Afrāsiyāb close ingloriously and in the midst of gathering public calamities, and also that Kai Khusrau dreaded the prospect of a very long reign.

One more trait of the Divine King can be found in the Zamyād Yasht, in which we read that King *Yima fell to the ground as soon as he uttered a falsehood* and the Royal Glory departed from him (s. 34). This reminds us of Sir James Frazer's dictum that the Divine King may not touch the earth. He bases this dictum on a wide survey of beliefs prevailing in countries as far apart as Japan and Uganda, Siam and Mexico (cf. *Golden Bough*, I 234, 236 and III 202). Ellis also refers repeatedly to the belief that such kings never suffer their feet to touch the ground, in his *Polynesian Researches*. According to the last named authority, kings are supposed not to walk but to fly, since they represent the Sun in the heavens. This primitive notion that the Divine King flies rather than walks is illustrated only once again in Iranian tradition. As Isaiah has put it, Cyrus travelled or

pursued his foes "by the way that he *had not gone with his feet*" (Isaiah 41.3). Very likely, it is on account of this tradition that, in the only sculpture of Cyrus that we possess, he is represented as having mighty wings (cf. Sarrē, *Die Kunst des alten Persien*, plate 1). In the Indo-Aryan tradition also, we encounter the same notion. For, in the *Drama-Parva* of the Mahābhārata, the chariot of Yudhishtira is described as moving four fingers above the surface of the earth as long as that King avoided untruth. But as soon as he told what was virtually an untruthful thing, in order to destroy the great Drona, his horses touched the ground. For, when Krishna saw that Drona was bent upon exterminating the Pandavas, he induced Yudhishtira to reply to Drona "the elephant is slain" about Ashvatthāmā. This instance of King Yudhishtira furnishes indeed a remarkable parallel to that of King Yima.

Though we have such vestiges and survivals of the notion of the Divine King in the Yasht, yet we are aware in reading it that, by its epoch, that belief is in the stage of decay, and it is the special merit of the Zamyād Yasht to present us for the first time with a consistent ideal of the Super-man, and to furnish us at the same time with a theoretical basis of the Super-man ideal. While in the other Yashts, the performance of great deeds is a result of boons granted by particular deities, in the Zamyād Yasht, the Super-man becomes such in virtue of his possession of the Royal Glory, which is the reward of high character and of high

merit. The triumph of the Good Cause throughout the course of history—and right upto the millennium—is attributed to the advent of a long series of such Super-men. In that last stage, “the victorious Sao-shyant and his helpers shall restore the world, which will thenceforth never grow old”, in virtue of their possession of such Royal virtue. But, meanwhile, there are a succession of heroes, who carry on the task of the world’s progress through their possession of such Royal virtue. For, with that Royal virtue, “there comes a man’s strength” and not merely a man’s strength but that of all animal creation. It also raises a man to ethical heights so that Kavi Husravah possessed in virtue of it “the righteousness of the law, the innocence of the law and the unconquerable power of the law.” Thus, the ethical element is put forward as the very crown and acme of the Royal Glory, since it was King Husravah, the most exalted one of the historical heroes possessing that Glory, who had it in the largest measure (section 75). Other qualities of the Super-men are also clearly expressed, “They were all of them brave, all of them strong, all of them healthful, all of them wise, all of them happy in their wishes, all of them powerful kings.”

It is noteworthy how the Yasht both anticipated the idea of the Super-man and avoided the criticism, that has been advanced against the conception, as advanced by literary men of the last and the present generation. It has been argued for example that “the great man is not great enough for the job.”

But, as the Yasht says, the Iranian Super-man's main task was to be "Keeper of the Aryan nations," to keep away hunger from the country and to uphold "the righteousness of the law" (sections 60 and 74). That task of keeping off the nomadic threat as well as famine and disorder was successfully achieved by all the Kings of the Kavi dynasty. It is true again that the Super-man cannot provide for his own succession; but it is also a fact that, provided a country is religiously minded and keeps up before it ideals like those propounded by the Yasht, it can have—at least at intervals—"rulers who are brave, wise and powerful."

Even amongst its Super-men, the Yasht makes a distinction which is a very significant one, when regarded from the point of view of the general lines of development of epic literature. Thus, while the heroes mentioned in the latter part of the Yasht (sections 71-85) are all historical kings (beginning with Kavi Kavāta and ending with Vishtāspa), the personalities mentioned in the earlier portion (sections 26-39) are mythological in character. Personages like Yima, Thraetaona and Kereshaspa are semi-divine or Divine Kings and stand on quite a different footing from the Kayān kings of a later and historical character. The student of epic literature will remember that a good few of the personages, met with alike in the Greek, Teutonic and Irish epics, can only be described as "faded gods" (Chadwick, *Growth of Literature*, Vol. I, p. 227). Thus several of the heroes in the

*Mabinogion* and even in the *Arthur saga* occupied divine positions in the beliefs of an earlier age.

It is of course difficult to separate the influence of any particular Yasht on the National Epic. But the *Zamyād Yasht* differs from the other Yashts in preferring to gather up the main trends of Iranian history and putting things in their proper perspective. Thus, in *Ābān Yasht* or *Gosh Yasht*, *Frangrasyāna* appears as only one amongst many foes of the Iranians. But, in the *Zamyād Yasht*, he appears as the great and persistent foe of the Aryans, possessed of almost superhuman powers. To take another example, other Yashts refer often to the Royal Glory (*Hvarenō*); but it is the *Zamyād Yasht* which gives us its theory as the basis of political obligation, and its transmigrations—if we may so call them—from dynasty to dynasty and from king to king. In the third place, while other Yashts hardly mention Seistan, it is the *Zamyād Yasht* in which we first see the very important part played by its princes and heroes in Aryan history and which prepares us for its predominant importance in the national epic.

Thus, the *Zamyād Yasht* has bequeathed to the *Shāhnāmeh* several important and characteristic features:—

- (I) An account of the transmission of the Royal Glory (*Hvarenō*) from one legitimate king to another, and a corresponding theory of the Divine Right of Kings as the basis of political obligation.

- (II) The ideal of the solidarity of the Aryan race and a plan of its history as a great struggle against the "havocking hordes" of Turan, as represented by Frangrasyāna (Afrāsiyāb).
- (III) The emphasis on the place occupied by the province of Seistan as the centre of Aryan or Iranian power and strength.
- (I) DEVELOPMENT OF THE HISTORY OF THE ROYAL GLORY IN THE EPIC

From amongst these topics, the fortunes and migrations of the Royal Glory (*Hvarenū*) might engage our attention first. Here, the epic very closely follows the Yasht with remarkable accuracy and follows the principles laid down by the latter with great consistency.

Thus, the Yasht makes Yima the mightiest amongst the possessors of the Royal Glory, since the Glory that left him sufficed for three of its great possessors like Mithra, Thraetaona (Feridun) and Kereshāspa. These were followed by Frangrasyāna himself, and by the Kavi dynasty beginning with Kavi Kavāta and including Kavi Syāvarshāna. This history of the Royal Glory we find repeated in the Shāhnāmeh and placed in the mouth of the hero Rustam in his dying moments. There, he consoles himself on the close of his mighty career by recollecting that the Royal Glory, that was in him, was in no way greater in measure than what Jamshid (Yima) possessed, and yet the latter

was sawn into two by his foes; than that of great kings like Feridun and Kai Qubād; than that of Afrāsiyāb, yet the latter was cut into two by Kai Khusrau; than that of Siyāwash and yet Siyāwash was beheaded at the hands of Geroe Zireh :

نه من بیش دارم ز جمشید فر      که ببرید دشمن میانش به ار  
همان از فریدون و از کیقباد      بزرگان و شاهان فرخ نژاد  
چو افراسیاب ان بد اندیش مرد      که کی خسرو او را بدو نیم کرد  
گلوئی سیاوش بخنجر برید      گروی زره چون زمانش رسید

This line of succession to the Royal Glory corresponds exactly with that in the Yasht—with one exception which is, however, only an *apparent* one. For, Rustam places his own name there instead of that of Kereshāspa. And, in the light of the evolution of the Iranian epic, Rustam had a perfect right to it, being not only the descendent of Kereshāspa but one whose exploits had eclipsed even those of the latter. If, indeed, some of the exploits of Kereshāspa had been transferred to Rustam, we need not be surprised at the transfer of the Royal Glory too.

In the Yasht, there has been left a gap or hiatus in the history of the succession of those who possessed the Royal Glory. For, in the Zamyād Yasht, there is no mention of the heroes to whom that Glory "clave" between the career of Thraetaona (Feridun) on the one hand, and those of Afrāsiyāb and Kai Qubād (Kavi Kavāta) on the other. But, though the Yasht could afford to leave such a gap in

the history of the Royal Glory, the epic could not allow any broken links, and proceeds to fill up that gap; and yet, in giving us this continuation and development of the history of the Royal Glory, the epic follows the very same basic principles as the Yasht. According to it, the Royal Glory passed on from Feridun to his youngest son Irach, and it was hoped that such possession of spiritual power might deter the brothers of Irach from perpetrating their great crime and might melt their hearts :

به بینند این قزو آورد اوی    بدان بر گزینند بیوند اوی

The epic makes King Minucheher the next possessor of the Royal Glory and his virtues rendered possible the continuation of that precious possession until his death :

بدادند از آن روز تلخ آگهی    ز بزمردن قزو شاهنشهی

It was unfortunate that his son Nodar proved a contrast to his father both as a King and as a man, and so the Royal Glory departed from him. A corollary of this loss of Royal Glory by the King was the desolation of his land :

جهان گشت ویران ز کردار اوی    غنوده شد آن بخت بیدار اوی  
تکرّد همی بر ره بخردی    ازو دور شد قزو ایزدی

In spite of this forfeiture of the Glory by King Nodar, the hope was entertained that a reform in his conduct might attract back that precious possession. As Zāl says :

من این ایزدی قزو باز آورم    جهان را بمهرش نیاز آورم

Vain hope! For there is no instance either in the Yasht or in the epic where the Glory, when once it has departed, can be induced to retrace its steps. The soul-shattered Nodar had to drink the cup of humiliation to the dregs. Nor did his sons, Tūs and Gustehem, possess the *Hvarenō* or Glory. Hence, it is very noteworthy that, although they were sons of a King, they were passed over in favour of a collateral line in the person of Zau and his son Kershāspa, who had that essential of Royalty. And, be it noted that this King Kershāspa of the Shāhnāmeḥ has been equated with the hero Kereshāspa of the Yasht (Christensen, *Les Kayanides*, p. 104):

که باشد بد و فرّ ایزدی      بتابد ز گفتار او بخردی  
ندیدند جز پور طهاسپ زو      که زورکیان داشت و فرهنگ کو  
چو بنشست بر تختگاه      یدر جهان راهمی داشت بازب و فر

In days to come, Tūs the son of Nodar was reminded that he had been passed over (in favour of Kai Qubād), because he did not possess the Royal Glory:

ترا کردی قزو رای درست      ز البرز شاهی نبایست جست

With the passing away of Zau and Kereshāspa, the digression of the epic from the Yasht in tracing the history of the Glory is ended. We come to the Kavi dynasty of which all members are, according to both authorities, endowed with the Glory. The epic goes indeed beyond the Yasht and describes each descendent of King Kai Qubād as having a physical mark (a mole on the arm) as a proof of the transmission

of the Glory. Thus, when Giw finds Kai Khusrau in Turan, he is not satisfied with the prince's claim to the possession of such Glory, until he is shown the physical mark invariably associated with it in the Kayān race:

بدو گفت کیو ای سرسرکشان      ز قَرّ بزوکِی چه داری نشان  
 نشان سیاوش پدیدار بود      چو برگستان نقطه قار بود  
 تو بکشای و بنمای بازو بمن      نشان تو پیداست بر انجمن  
 برهنه تن خویش بنمود شاه      نکه کرد کیو آن نشان سیاه  
 که میراث بود از که کیقباد      درستی بدان بدکیان را نژاد

According to the Yasht, Kai Qubād and his seven successors of the Kavi dynasty were equally successful possessors of the Royal Glory; but here again, the Shāhnāmeh has its own expanded version of the history of the Royal Glory. It describes how King Kai Kāus lost the Royal Glory as the result of his unwise policy and actions, and the once prosperous land of Irān lay waste as a consequence of this, until Kai Khusrau appeared on the scene:

که کاوس بی قَرّ و بی پِروای      نشسته است بر تخت بر رهنمای  
 ز باران هوا خشک شدهفت سال      دگرگونه شد رنگ و برگشت حال

With King Kai Khusrau, we come to the prince who was preeminently the possessor of the *Hvarenō* or Royal Glory, and who was pronounced to be so by the angelic voice of Sraosha himself:

مرا گفت در خواب فریخ سروش      که قَرّش نشاند ز ایران خروش

It was his Glory that enabled him to seize Bahman Dezh and to defeat in a single combat the formidable Shideh (the son of Afrāsiyāb).

The Zamyād Yasht and the Shāhnāmeḥ agree that on the death of Kai Khusrau, the Royal Glory passed to the line of Luhrāsp and Gushtāsp (Vish-tāspa). For, though Akhrura (the son of Kai Khusrau) is mentioned and even highly praised in the Farvardin Yasht (s. 137), he is—for some unknown reason—not reputed to be the possessor of the Royal Glory. The guess might be hazarded that it was because he never reigned, and because rulership and the possession of the Royal Glory were becoming exchangeable terms. Possibly also, the premature death of this Crown Prince was one of the causes of the renunciation of the throne by Kai Khusrau. That the Prince was both generous and loyal to friends, the Farvardin Yasht tells us by implication. In any case, the Royal Glory passed on to Luhrāsp and Gushtāsp as Daqiqi informs us :

چو گشتاسپ بر شد بتخت پدر      که فر پدر داشت و تخت پدر

The story of the Royal Glory is thenceforward carried on by the Shāhnāmeḥ alone, which attributes it first to Alexander—though passingly—and then to Ardeshir Pāpakān and his dynasty. In the case of Alexander, we can understand why the mention of the Royal Glory is slight, and is only brought in at the very end of the Episode as a half-hearted compliment :

ز بابل بروم آورند آگهی      که تیره شد آن قر شاهنشاهی

Obviously, Firdausi had no authority from the Bāstān-Nāmeḥ for considering Alexander as one of the bearers of the Royal Glory. But, in the case of the first of Sassanides, the description of the "cleaving" of the Royal Glory is most dramatic and realistic, thus throwing light on how the transfer of the Royal Glory was interpreted and envisaged in old Iran. The Royal Glory is symbolised as a ram, which follows Ardashir and protects him from the pursuit of his enemy, Ardavān, finally settling securely on the former's back. That ram, as the symbol of Royal Glory, is seen on numerous Sassanian coins. It was also depicted on the Arch of Chosroes (cf. Sarre's *Die Kunst des Alten Persien*, p. 103).

#### DEVELOPMENT OF THE IDEA OF THE DIVINE RIGHT OF KINGS

We have seen that the Zamyād Yasht is an epic as well as a history. It might be added that it is also a very important document in the history of political doctrine. For, it is one of the most important sources of the doctrine of the Divine Right of Kings. To this doctrine, in the world of political theory, corresponds the legend of the *hvarəno Kavaem* in the Yasht. The Yasht transmitted this religio-poetic doctrine to the Shāhnāmeḥ, as we have seen. This aspect of the Iranian epic has been remarked on by several modern authors—but above all by Prof. F. W. Buckler of Oberlin College, who has written a monograph on it, which has appeared in a Supplement to the *Journal of American Oriental Society* (1935). The

views of the present writer on the subject will be best brought out by discussing and commenting on Prof. Buckler's contribution. As he well observes "Firdausi is first and last the Poet of the Kayan Glory". A second matter, which the learned Professor emphasises justly, is that the poet influenced profoundly the prevailing theory of sovereignty in Islam, and that "the Shāhnāmeḥ became the foundation, on which future Muslim Kings based their right to rule". Before Firdausi wrote, Islamic Kings had to prove their credentials as successors of the Arabian Prophet through some charter vouchsafed by the Khalif of Baghdad; after him these kings had only to show their claim direct to divine vicegerency. To quote Prof. Buckler's words—"there is in Firdausi's Shāhnāmeḥ a definite political *motif*—the reinstatement of the Persian King as the King of Kings, without reference to Muslim authority—particularly the authority of the 'Abbasid Khalifah at Baghdad'. Finally, the Professor has done great service by showing the relations, in which the Shāhnāmeḥ stands to the Cyrus legends both in the Bible, and in Herodotus and Xenophon, to the Jesus *saga* and to the Book of Daniel.

Having shown the importance of the contribution, Prof. Buckler's essay has rendered, we might be permitted to comment upon and to supplement it. In the first place, the Professor might have mentioned that the Zamyād Yasht constitutes the background of the treatment of the topic of the Divine Right of Kings by either Firdausi or the

writers of that *Khudaināmeh*, on which he drew so largely for Iranian tradition in general. It is in fact the central and most ancient document on the subject—its antiquity being far greater than is usually supposed, as Herzfeld has shown. We have seen how closely the *Shāhnāmeh* follows that Yasht both in historical outlook and outlines and in political theory. And this, not because Firdausi had seen or studied the Yasht, but because that venerable document had permeated Iranian thought and Iranian opinion on the subject, including the Cyrus tradition and other modes of thought which, no doubt, left their impress on those Jews of the Exilic period who inspired both Deutero—Isaiah and the Book of Daniel and “the Jewish Messianic hope”. Through this last, the Yasht, or rather the Iranian tradition about the *hvareno Kavaem*, influenced “the form of the Christ-saga and its derivatives—the Four Gospels.”

Professor Buckler justly calls the Book of Daniel “the Zamyād Yasht of Hebrew literature”; and that comparison might have been expanded by him with great advantage. He might have shown how Nebuchadnezzar’s experience of “the Kingdom departing from him” and its restoration after seven years, symbolises the departure of the “*hvareno Kavaem*” from Kings like Frangrasyāna in the Zamyād Yasht. Indeed the word “majesty” used in Daniel IV. 30 seems to be a literal translation of the *hvareno Kavaem* or “Royal Glory”. The same word is used in Daniel V. 19 where the “Majesty” departs from Belshāzzar and is trans-

ferred to Cyrus. So also, the beasts rising from the sea and one of them devouring the others (Daniel, chapter VII) are reminiscent of the Tir Yasht, section VI.

Prof. Buckler has written much and well about the great task which Firdausi performed for Sultan Mahmud—"his deliverance from the thralldom of an unrecognised Muslim authority (the Caliphate) by means, which would not undermine the authority of the King." It is by consulting the historians like Baihaqi, Utbi and Gardizi, who wrote under the successor of Mahmud, that we are enabled to see how urgent that task was and how important for the dynasty of Mahmud. As things were, Sultan Mahmud had to be very obsequious to the Caliph-al-Qādir Billah in order both to advance his own prestige in the Islamic world and to secure the succession of his favourite son. It was only when the Sultan's power reached its zenith, that he allowed himself to treat the Caliph with less respect and to moderate his zeal as regards the volume of his correspondence with Baghdād. Indeed, his campaign in Irān against Buwaihids had for one of its main objects the strengthening of his hold over the Caliphate. But, at least in the beginning of his career, his zeal to serve and please the Caliph knew no bounds. Thus, the chief motive of his persecution of the Carmathians was to please the Caliph. Similarly, when one of the Sultan's favourite officers—Abu Ali Hasan (Hasnak)—received a robe of honour from the rival Fatimide Caliph, the Sultan had to suffer the humiliation of receiving a very angry

letter from the Caliph of Baghdād and of having to send the robe, that had offended, to Baghdad to be burned there publicly. Correspondingly, the Sultan attached a very high value to the title of *Yaminul-Dowlah* conferred upon him by that Caliph, when the former ordered the *Khutba* to be read in the name of the latter, on the conquest of Khurāsān. Even at the end of the Sultan's reign, he was delighted when fresh titles of honour were conferred on him and on the members of his family by the pontiff at Baghdād. Finally, in order to pave the way for the succession of his favourite son, the Sultan had to request the Caliph to give precedence to the name of that son in the pontifical correspondence with Ghazni. It is obvious that the haughty spirit of the Sultan must have been galled by the necessity of showing such constant deference to the Caliph. One way out of the difficulty was to crush the Buwaihids and to take their place as the Mayor of the Palace at Baghdād. But as that was not to be, he must have rejoiced in the rise of a theory of the Divine Right of Kings, which was of venerable antiquity, which gave opportune support to the royal title and to the dynastic hopes of Mahmud, and which was put forward by the unique literary skill of Firdausi, which would ensure its wide acceptance.

## (II) ARYAN HISTORY ENVISAGED AS A STRUGGLE WITH THE TURANIANS : THE CAREER OF AFRĀSIYĀB

Both, in the epic and in the Yasht, the central trend of Aryan history is conceived as a struggle

with the Turanians represented in the main by Afrāsiyāb. In other Yashts, Frangrasyāna figures mainly as the opposite number of Kai Khusrau and the murderer of Siyāwash and Aghrerath. But, in the Zamyād Yasht, he is made into a personality of demoniac proportions and greatness, trying repeatedly and over long ages to seize "that Glory that belongs to the Aryan nations, born and unborn, and to the holy Zarathushtra". He is thus delineated as the opposite number not only of Kai Khusrau but of the whole Kavi line of princes and of Zarathushtra himself in a sense. This conception is followed in the main in the Shāhnāme, and furnishes that epic with a magnificent representative of the Evil powers, not unworthy to be placed side by side with Milton's "Satan".

In the matter of the career of Afrāsiyāb, the Shāhnāme follows the Zamyād Yasht both as regards the general view and into the minutiae of detail. The Yasht gives him in his youth a glorious career, since he "bore the Glory when Drvāu was killed, the Bull was killed" (section 93). On this, Darmesteter remarks that "it may allude to brighter sides unknown to us, of the Turanian hero", and he proceeds to identify "the Bull" with his brother Aghraeratha, who is also designated in Pahlavi literature as Gopatshah or "the Bull-man". Obviously, the Yasht dates the loss of the Royal Glory by Frangrasyāna from the time when he slew this brother and incurred the odium of fratricide. Correspondingly, the Shāhnāme surrounds him with

a halo of glory in his youth. His father, Pashang, is full of admiration for his son's heroic stature, his eloquent tongue, his generous nature and heroic strength :

بمغز پشتک اندر آمد شتاب      چو دید آن سہی قد افراسیاب  
برو بازوی شیرو ہم زور پیل      و زو سایہ افکنده برچند میل  
زباش بکردار برآندہ تیغ      چو در یاد دل و کف چو بازندہ میغ

His chief motives for invading Irān are said to have been a lofty ambition and a burning desire to avenge his ancestor, Tūr, and to successfully prosecute that old vendetta—a theme which never fails to appeal to Firdausi or to win his applause. He contrasts the spirited behaviour of Afrāsiyāb with the tame spirit of his grandfather Zādshum, who never raised his sword against Irān in his life :

اگر زادشم تیغ افراشتی      جهان را چنین خوار نگذاشتی  
کنون آنچه مانیدہ بود از تیا      زدیمیم جستن و از کیمیا  
کشادش بر تیغ تیز من است      گہ شورش و رستخیز من اسب

However, the career of Afrāsiyāb in the *Shāhnāmeh* is a *study in the degradation* of heroic youth. By the time he kills his brother Aghraeratha, both his "Glory" and his good fortune have departed and his mind was occupied by wicked thoughts:

یکی پر ز آتش یکی پر خرد      خرد با سر دیوکی در خورد  
چنین گفت اکنون سر بخت او      شود تار و ویران شود تخت او

The Zamyād Yasht and the Shāhnāmeḥ agree that the "Glory" and the Divine grace departed from Afrāsiyāb, when he murdered his brother. As his captor, Hōma, reminded Afrāsiyāb in his last days:

ز شاهان گیتی برادر که کشت      که شد نیز بایاک بزدان درشت

But those days were as yet far away, and both the Yasht and the epic agree in giving to Afrāsiyāb a long period of power and prosperity—stretching almost from the death of Thraetaona (Feridun) to the age of Kai Khusrau, during which the Turanian ravaged Irān repeatedly. The Shāhnāmeḥ follows the Zamyād Yasht as regards the *three* efforts made by Frangra-syāna to seize the Royal Glory. The first effort is that narrated also by the Iranian Bundahishn, when Manushchihr was either killed or besieged in Padash-khvargar. The Shāhnāmeḥ makes Afrāsiyāb kill not Minucheḥr but his son Naodar. Irān is saved from this first attack of the Turanian King by the efforts of Uzava (Zau in the epic). The misguiding of Kai Kāus by the demons gives Afrāsiyāb a chance for his second and third invasions—the second invasion being the occasion of the epic search for King Kai Khusrau in Turan.

### (III) THE IMPORTANCE OF SEISTAN IN THE YASHT AND IN THE EPIC

In the Yasht, great importance is attached to Seistan as the seat of the mighty Kavi (Kayān) dynasty. The province is not mentioned by the name which it bore later, but it is unmistakably described

as "there where lies lake Kāsava, along with the Haetumant river". Incidentally, this method of describing the province furnishes us with *an important datum regarding the date of composition of the Zamyād Yasht*, since obviously the Sakas had not migrated to the province and given it the name of Sakastan or Seistan at the period of the Yasht. But the Yasht recognizes and emphasises the importance of the province as the seat of the mightiest of the Iranian dynasties. Such a description of the place was not possible in case of the epic; for one reason, because, when that epic began to take shape, the Sakas had made the province their own, and the idea that it formed once the very heart of Irān was forgotten. There was another reason also why the composers of the epic of Irān could not dream of placing the greatest of its dynasties in Seistan. For, in the ages that had elapsed since the Kayāni dynasty, the province of Pārs had taken the pride of place in all Irān, having produced the Imperial houses of Achaemenes and of Sassan. Hence, the epic is constrained to make Pārs and its far-famed Istakhr the capital, not only of Kayāni prince like Kai Kaus, but also of their predecessors like Nodar and Zau. Apart from Istakhr, Balkh too had later but excellent historic claims.

But, if the Iranian epic could not make Seistan the seat of the Kayāni Kings, it could make amends to it in other ways. It could make of it the very seat and centre of Iranian heroism—and it is this fact that has made Seistan in the Shāhnāmeh the sword-arm

of old Irān. Even the brilliant epigram of Prof. Herzfeld that "the Rustam *saga* is the *saga* of Kršašpa rejuvenated by the history of Gundofarr" is a half truth and does not account fully for the prominence of Rustam in the epic. For, Rustam represents two of the brightest periods of Iranian legend and history—that of the Kayāni Kings of the region of lake Kāsava and the river Haetumant (as narrated by the Yasht) as also the glories of the great Parthian viceroys ruling over both Western India and regions between Irān and India, of whom Gundofarr was but one. Kereshāspa, on the other hand, represents the pre-Kayāni period and older strata of legends. But, no doubt, the supposition that he was an ancestor of Rustam did cast a reflected light on the latter. However, this "clustering of the chief epic legends of Irān" round the person of Rustam has given rise to a curious anomaly. For, the Kayāni Kings, whose epoch according to the Yasht formed the golden age of Seistan, become somewhat feeble shadows of their real selves. The concentration of all heroic achievements in the person of Rustam has had a scenic effect, and has given a tremendous central figure to the Iranian epic, for whose equal we may explore the world of epics in vain. But, on the other hand, the real Kayāni Kings beginning with Kavi Kavāta and ending with Kavi Husravah have become mere *rois faineant*, who habitually left all the tasks of war to Rustam. They are no longer what they are in the Zamyād Yasht "all of them brave, all of them

strong, all of them powerful kings." The greatness of Rustam's glory has not only reduced their heroic stature but has made them strangers to their own native land of Seistan. In the epic, their residence is represented as far from "where lies lake Kāsava along with the Haetumant river." Thus *Rustam has appropriated in the epic not only the exploits of the Kayāni Kings, but even their native land.* Such a huge landslide can only happen in the peculiarly volcanic conditions of the Iranian epic. In other epics, we are accustomed to changes in time and place as regards *sagas*. But nowhere else do we see a whole dynasty, who had made a country illustrious, swept away from that land, in favour of a much later hero, who is in his turn made the contemporary and the supporter of the dynasty. In fact, the real connection of the Kayānis with Seistan is asserted only in the Zamyād Yasht and corroborated by the noble traditions of the later Kayāni princes (*Muluk-i-Kayāni*), who ruled in Seistan from the Middle Ages upto the last century.

It is indeed remarkable how the connection of the Kayāni princes with Seistan has been echoed and re-echoed in the thousand years, that have passed away since the age of Yāqub, son of Leith, who established his empire in Seistan at the end of the ninth century. Mr. G. P. Tate, who is an authority on the history and archæology of Seistan, calls the line of Yāqub Leith "the elder branch of the Kaiān" (cf. Tate, *Seistan*, p. 20). A junior branch of the family

regained Seistan and continued to govern it with occasional interruptions until the middle of the last century (Tate, *op. cit.* p. 95). And these Kayāni princes ruled for a whole millennium in Seistan in spite of invasions like those of Sultan Mahmud, of the Saljuqs, of the Turks of Changiz Khan, of Tamerlane and of Nadirshah. Indeed, before the rise of Nadirshah to power, there was a great chance of the Kayāni prince, Malik Mahmud, extending his rule all over Persia. Thus, for a thousand years, a family claiming to be Kayāni has ruled Seistan almost continuously and has upheld Iranian traditions. And, for centuries, the last great sacred fire of Irān (Mino Karko) was venerated there under the name of *Karkuye* Shah. Even a sceptical historian of to-day might hence well be inclined to accept the dictum of the Zamyād Yasht that the Royal Glory "cleaves unto him who grows up there where lies lake Kāsava along with the Haetumant river" and that this "Glory cannot be forcibly seized."

- We have now seen the high value of the Zamyād Yasht both as a source of inspiration for the Iranian epic and as a most important document as regards the history of the Aryans. No case is here put forward for the full racial distinctness or purity of the historical Aryans. But, no one has disputed the importance of the influence of the cultural environment of a group or race, or the value of race prejudice.

either in social life or as a political weapon. And the Iranian Aryans did possess in an eminent degree such a mass psyche and cultural milieu—having regard to their dualistic religious psychology, their desire to lead a settled life and hence to struggle against nomadism, and their consciousness to evolve higher forms of political life. It is surprising to see to what intensity and extent the Iranian Aryans carried their race-consciousness and their idea of an essentially organic type of racial unity. Thus, if sacrifices were not performed properly, it was not merely the individual who suffered but the race: "Plagues will ever pour upon the Aryan nations ; the Aryans will be smitten by their fifties and their hundreds, by their hundreds and their thousands, by their thousands and their tens of thousands, by their tens of thousands and their myriads of myriads" (Bahram Yasht, s. 53, and Tir Yasht, s. 61). So also the prayer even of Aryan princes and "chiefs of myriads" is "that I may be as constantly victorious as any one of all the Aryans" (Bahram Yasht, s. 59). All this indicates and bears witness to an unprecedented and unparalleled phenomenon of race consciousness ; and, since all the various aspects of this phenomenon are illustrated in the Zamyād Yasht, it might be said to form a unique document in Sociology, History and Ethnology.

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